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IMAGINEFX MARCH 2006

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

I LIKE TO IMAGINE WORLDS PEOPLE CAN TRULY CONNECT WITH. I WANT PEOPLE TO SEE PARALLELS – PAGE 48

ImagineFX Workshops | Galleries | Interviews | Reviews | Free DVD |

www.imaginefx.com

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

NEW MASTERS OF FANTASY ART
Meet the next generation of digital artists about to conquer the world...

FREE DVD INSIDE
The files and software you need to complete this month's workshops

Art secrets
Create eerie sci-fi landscapes
Work magic with brushes
Manga cel-shading tips
Portrait masterclass
Art theory for beginners

79
WORKS OF ART DECONSTRUCTED
The best amateur and pro artists showcased

FREE FANTASY POSTER!
With stunning artwork from leading artists

Paint incredible
DIGITAL ART

Perfect the fine art of digital painting. Top fantasy artists from around the globe reveal all inside...

ALL THIS AND LEARN TO PAINT LIKE THE MAN BEHIND **STAR WARS!**

Cover artist
CAMILLE KUO

COUNTRY: Taiwan and US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS:
Frank Frazetta, Cheng-Wen, Gary
Tonge and a lot more
SOFTWARE USED:
Painter, Photoshop, Paint BBS
WEB: www.camilkuo.com

Camille Kuo is the talent behind our
stunning cover image this month.
She painted this piece, entitled

Nagadance, in
Photoshop, after
posing for the image
herself in the mirror.
"I've always been
fascinated by different
cultures," she tells us. And the
inspiration behind the piece? "The
red finger tips in this painting are
inspired by a scene in an Indian
movie. I wanted to portray an Indian
girl who is dancing with mysterious
snakes," says Camille.

"It's a pity that I didn't present her
with a type of common south Asian
cobra," she laughs. "For the
background, I combined Chinese
watercolour technique along with
the depth of perspective view."

Camille is one of many skilled
artists featured in this issue's FXPose
reader gallery, starting on page 10. ●

Introducing...

Featured artists

Every month, ImagineFX calls on the finest digital artists in the world to offer you the best guidance and share their techniques and inspiration…
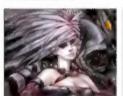
Marta Dahlig

This month, Polish artist Marta Dahlig is the focus of our Rising Stars feature, beginning on page 44. She also shares her secrets for painting perfect portraits in an exclusive ImagineFX workshop, beginning on page 84. And don't forget to check out her high-res source files on your free DVD and her image on your poster…
www.blackeri.com

Chris Foss

Chris engineered the look of early sci-fi films and has created some legendary futuristic art. He worked on Dune, Superman and Alien, and has done art for just about every classic sci-fi author. He trained as an architect but digressed before the end of his degree into drawing cartoon strips for Penthouse and then illustrated The Joy of Sex.
www.chrisfoss.net

Joanna Zhou

The award-winning manga artist from UK-based Sweatdrop Studios takes a long, hard look at e-frontier's latest release – Manga Studio 3 – this issue. Find out what she thinks of the new release in our exclusive review, beginning on page 102. Look out for Joanna's Manga Studio tutorial, coming soon in ImagineFX.
www.chocolatepixels.com

Kuang Hong

There are not many artists that leave us absolutely speechless with every piece they produce, but Kuang Hong is one of them. We meet the uber-talented 25-year old on page 56 and discover the inspiration behind his stunning artwork. You'll find one of his pieces on your free double-sided poster, inside this magazine.
www.zemotion.net/noah

Martin Bland

This month, we bundled UK concept artist Martin Bland into an old disused warehouse, took his picture and then asked him to share his techniques (workshop begins on page 68). And he still didn't mind talking to us for hours on his inspirations, and the meanings behind his haunting apocalyptic visions. Read all about the artist on page 48.
www.spyroteknik.com

Adam Benton

A man with a passion for sci-fi and fantasy art and Bryce, Adam Benton achieves the remarkable this issue as he creates a futuristic city from scratch using Daz's tool. You'll find all the files you need to follow the workshop on your free DVD. Look out for next issue when Adam turns his hand to creating a magical fantasy scene.
www.kromekat.com

Welcome!
What a response...

If you were one of the hundreds of people who contacted me since we launched this magazine around four weeks ago, then I thank you. Your feedback and opinions on the content of ImagineFX is what will shape it over time. I'll read every email that comes in personally...

If you happened to miss last issue, let me explain what we're all about at ImagineFX. The idea is simple – to unite a global community of fantasy and sci-fi artists through stunning artwork, insightful interviews and inspirational workshops. There's also a free DVD every issue, featuring high-resolution artwork from some of the world's leading painters.

This month, we're continuing what we started in issue one. We have a massive workshops section, containing in-depth tutorials from the likes of Martin Bland (page 68), Ryan Church (page 78) and Marta Dahlig (page 84) that will inspire and teach you some of the most sought-after techniques in the fantasy art community. In addition, there's interviews with Martin Bland (awarded our monthly 'Master of Art' prize) and the incredibly talented Kuang Hong. I await your comments...

Rob Carney, Editor
rob@imaginefx.com

Tell us what you think!
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Overseas: +44 1858 438 794

Subscribe now! Turn to page 35
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

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WORKSHOPS

"Harness the power of Photoshop's brushes for
masterful illustrations like this Troll" **Jonny Duddle** (page 72)

Artist GALLERIES

Artist RESOURCES

REGULARS

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Exclusive
BOOKS
and DVDs
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page 29

"My characters' eyes look as if they are trying to say something" Kuang Hong (page 56)

Image: Kuang Hong

Reader
FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Rafi Adrian Zulkarnain
LOCATION: Indonesia
WEB: www.solidgrafi.cjb.net/
EMAIL: solidgrafi@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds max

Though he has a background in traditional media, Rafi likes to mix it up with 3D and 2D computer graphics. "My style of art developed from natural, through surreal, to fantasy art," he explains.

Like many artists, Rafi finds the technical nature of 3D a little restrictive. "So right now I'm focusing more on 2D." But he acknowledges: "It's not only technique that matters, idea are important too. There must be a balance."

1 HIGH PRIESTESS The High Priestess is a bit like a moon goddess. She's a fine example of Rafi's mastery of 2D digital media.

2 BIRDS OF PREY One of Rafi's first works for 2006, also in 2D. "I'm postponing 3D until the technology offers more freedom and usability," he adds.

ARTIST OF THE MONTH
Rafi Adrian Zulkarnain wins a copy of Exotique, showcasing the world's best CG females, and Painter, featuring the latest and greatest Corel Painter art. Find out more at:
www.ballisticpublishing.com

TSAI 101006

🇺🇸 **Francis Tsai**
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.teamgt.com
EMAIL: tsai@teamgt.com
SOFTWARE: Adobe Photoshop 7.0

Francis grew up in a small west Texas town. He's been drawing as long as he can remember. He now works as a lead concept artist for High Moon Studios in California, as well as doing freelance art and design work for the role playing industry, comics, film and television. He also has degrees in chemistry and architecture.

1 BIKER "I'm one of five concept artists in our company. Once in a while, we each illustrate our take on some common theme or subject," explains Francis. "In this case the exercise was centred on the theme of vehicles and the undead."

2 DRAGON Created for Wizards of the Coast, this creature is known as Rhashaak of Haka'torvhak, and is featured in the Dungeons and Dragons book, Eberron Explorer's Handbook.

3 MACROTUS Another extra curricular exercise. This time the basis was a well known comic book character. "I tried to imagine how a character like that might appear to someone who had no idea who or what he was about," says Francis.

■ **Christopher J. Anderson**
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.chrisjanderson.com
EMAIL: praxuschris@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Although he first got into fantasy and sci-fi art through movies such as *Indiana Jones* and *Alien*, video games had the strongest impact on Chris: "Especially the more story-based, fantasy oriented ones. My style has developed from being incredibly cartoonish to being more realistic but without loosing that style," he says. "Today, I continue to push myself with understanding and challenging realism with styles that will make people perceive the images I create in a different light."

1 THE COLDEST DAY This bruised woman is trying to escape from shadow-like phantoms. "Being chased by wicked beings makes this the coldest day she will ever have."

2 AFFAIRE DE COEUR OF THE YOUNG "This is about a feeling of infatuation that one has for another," says Chris. "In this case, a young boy falls for a girl he's drawn. "And then he finds her."

3 ORC WARRIOR GARDREGON While studying rapid painting methods, Chris wanted to "create a feeling of strength and terror with a powerful-looking character."

■ Leigh van Biene
LOCATION: Netherlands
WEB: http://leigh.net
EMAIL: leievb@random.be
SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7, Painter 7, ArtCanvas 1.1

Leigh cites a mixture of Disney, art nouveau and anime as forming her main stylistic inspirations. "I'm driven by a desire to capture the sense of energy, decoration and atmosphere these art styles have," she says. Working with digital media in one form or another since the age of 14, Leigh relies on the traditional combination of Intuos2 and Photoshop. "The ability this gives to tweak colours, add textures and layer endlessly have been a crucial element in the development of my style," she adds.

1 *Tuscania* "This image was inspired by the atmosphere of summer nights and street performers on the boulevards of the south of France," says Leigh. "It was also my first digital work done in Painter 7."

2 *AMELAR08* This is Leigh's interpretation of a porcelain mask-clad character called Kerstin Jane, created by Heather Coulberg for White Wolf's RPG Changeling: The Dreaming. (See www.deviantart.com/deviation/31347771/). "She wears porcelain masks and is meant to have a mysterious and slightly creepy appearance," says Leigh.

This issue's front cover artist, Camille, began drawing comics secretly when she was a young teenager, for her own entertainment. She recalls: "I thought i would never be allowed to become an artist – there was a strong view that art was low class and useless! However, her parents helped her out when she moved to the United States to continue her education. "They have now accepted me as an artist," she smiles.

1 DRAGON AND PHOENIX OF ANCIENT CHINA "I've always been interested in ancient China," says Camille. "The dragon and phoenix have represented the emperors throughout Chinese history."

2 KING OF THE BEAST Another Chinese subject. "This one is loosely influenced by one of the creatures in the famous book, Journey to the West," explains Camille.

Chris Mits
LOCATION: Scotland
EMAIL: mits.chry@btinternet.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop 7, Bryce 4,
Poser 5, Paint Shop Pro, Cadvance 6?

"It's probably a cliché, but at 14 I read Tolkien, came across Roger Dean's visions and was hooked," says Chris. He pools his architectural background and CAD talents with his painting. "The post-production in Photoshop gets me a finished piece for reproduction while the original long hand goes on the wall."

1 SMAUG COMES TO THE LONELY MOUNTAIN "A scene I've been wanting to do for ages," says Chris. "The Hobbit's main baddie makes his first appearance." The landscape was generated in Bryce, with a rough dragon created to get the look right.

2 THE LODGE A personal favourite for Chris. "Although my style has changed, I still think it works. The owls were added as an afterthought but they make the picture."

3 BRIDGE OF DREAMS "I made this from scratch. The rather impractical architecture was built in 3D using my archaic Cadvance program – it will stand up, honest." Surprisingly, the wolf was a Poser figure, "with a lot of photo reference."

James Paick
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.jamespaick.com
EMAIL: jpaick@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS, Mac OS

James picked up a pencil at an early age and copied anything that he thought was intriguing. "My art became a voice for me to communicate, to just let loose and have fun," he remembers. In terms of subject matter, he just did whatever art came naturally. Now he works full time as an illustrator and art director in entertainment advertising, working on many game titles and films. James is not one to let the grass grow under his feet: "I also juggle many freelance projects ranging from video game concept designs to graphic novels."

1 DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN This digital matte shows off James' futurescape capabilities perfectly.

2 CATHEDRAL A concept illustration in the space opera style.

3 WATERFALL PORT A work that depicts a kind of future idyll we might enjoy.

Andreas N.
Grøntved
LOCATION: Denmark
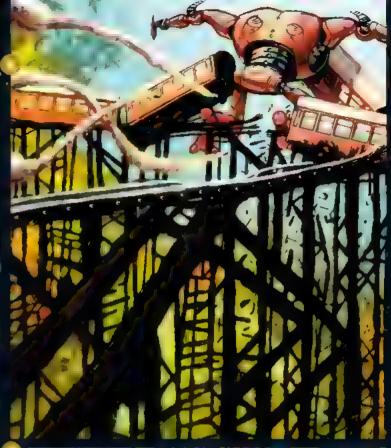WEB: http://www.vote.dk
EMAIL: drean@vote.dk
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

"The path of my life has been very simple," says Andreas. "From the day I got a pencil in my hands, I've been working my way towards the creative industries." But the route was not without its twists and turns. "I've always been told by my parents that I should get a useful education before I consider animation, design and illustration," he adds. Andreas complied, dutifully. "I regret it from time to time," he admits. "But right now I'm working on the final piece for my degree in character animation. This is a cause of great happiness. It's been the best 3½ years of my life". His next major decision will be whether to head for film or games.

1 DREAM_ROBOT "This guy has become immune towards any form of media, especially commercials," explains Andreas. "The teller-robot on the wall is offering cheap-beries for 7 kr-units."

2 ROBOT_TRASH This is a personal favourite for Andreas: "The robot is escaping a direct attack from a rocketbot in the area. Unfortunately it hits a bridge and a train while trying to not dodge the rockets."

3 ROBOT_HILL This tumbling droid "would normally be at the focal point of the image. "But instead I focused in on the hill," he explains, which he says was tricky to pull off. "The result is quite about the interesting in look at."

Steve Holt
LOCATION: US
WEB: http://senere-3dart.com
EMAIL: steve_h@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Painter 9

As a boy growing up in the south east of England, Steve would spend much of his free time daydreaming, drawing and painting. Inspired by classic sci-fi books and movies, he has always enjoyed using his imagination to explore the fantastical. Why sci-fi? Steve replies: "I like using my imagination to create artwork that no-one has seen before." Steve worked as a 3D artist in the UK computer games industry before moving to the US as a freelance 2D/3D digital artist.

1 ESCAPE FROM FIRE MOUNTAIN "This piece was painted just for fun. It depicts a young couple trying to escape boiling rivers of lava and the giant creatures set free by the volcanic eruptions," says Steve.

2 MOON CANYON "Over the years I've seen various fantasy and sci-fi artists paint the classic image of the beautiful babe astride the giant beast," muses Steve. "Well this is my version of that popular theme."

3 MANY FINGERS "Here she stands at the beginning of her journey, staring wide-eyed into a damp and darkened tomb," begins Steve. "Behind her, outside the tomb, there is light which represents hope and all things that are guarded true to the water."

Stephen ████
LOCATION: England
WEB: www.epilogue.net/cgi/database/art/list.pl?gallery=14286&genre=1
EMAIL: Burning.art@virgin.net
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

"I've worked as an artist for 15 years," relates Stephen. Brought up on Star Wars, he fed his imagination with Arthur C Clarke and 2000AD, but says that initially "the results were doodlings and art from a young age but I never really took it seriously." He adds: "My sci-fi and fantasy switch was flicked back on six years ago and I started to develop a style that I was pleased with." Formerly a traditional-media-only type of guy, Stephen tried mixing the two but eventually digital won the day. "I occasionally sneak acrylics in my pics though. Old habits die hard."

1 Stephen really enjoyed producing this. "It has everything I like; a big robot, big armour, big guns, alien world." It was an acrylic under painting, scanned in at 600 DPI then digitally rendered.

2 GREYLIGHT This is a character I'm still fine tuning," says Stephen. "This render is the one I'm most pleased with at the moment." It's inspired by the film, Nikita. "Her actions speak louder than words. This bounty hunter is in high demand."

3 BLUE 8 Stephen is working on a personal project: "I basically wanted a cool-looking alien whose name is so unpronounceable that others refer to it by the lone number of its armour."

■ **Pierre Droal**
LOCATION: France
WEB: www.hyperborea.com
EMAIL: contact@hyperborea.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter

"Through my painting, and my writing, I am trying to open a door leading to artistic worlds, where the stakes of today's society are expressed in a tough, but clearer way," Pierre says. He is fascinated by photography, because it "immortalises every state of mankind." He adds: "Maybe it explains why my pictures tend to be realistic: I try to photograph what's in my mind, to make it tangible."

1 IN THE PATRIARCH "This is the godfather of Riik and is therefore one or two steps closer to being a giant lizard," explains Pierre.

2 THE NAIVE ELF Elves are often described as immortals, so Pierre wanted to express the oddness of having an old soul in a young body. "His eyes, his mouth and hands are the only witnesses of his real age," he adds.

3 RIIK, LOST IN HIS THOUGHTS "This character almost looks human, but he has a different ancestry. "Human's ancestors were apes, but Riik' ancestors were Saurians," Pierre says.

IS IT ART?

I am often asked if digital art can rightly be called art.

By Todd Lockwood

Insofar as it is created by the artist as a means of fulfilling his personal vision, of course it is art. Relying on pre-created routines or filters, however, may fail to fulfil your artistic vision.
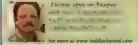
Every digital painting brings with a glimpse of the time working of the artist's mind. What makes art outstanding is the message it conveys. The mere existence of paint on canvas or pixel on monitor does not create art. It is the communication which makes it so.

The danger in digital art is the proliferation of short-cuts. These are a big part of the problem some have with calling digital art Art. The hand of the artist has been replaced by an identikit computer filter. Some will rise above that challenge, that's true, but most don't.

It has been said that an artist spends the first 10 years of their career mastering their media, and the rest of their lives creating art. True or not, it's important to acknowledge that understanding the basics of art is all part of gaining the mastery. Over-reliance on prepared computer models can shortchange that fundamental part of your education.

Every outstanding computer artist I know, knows their stuff inside out. It is their personal knowledge of their image that makes them artists. It is the communication of their knowledge that makes it art.

Doing sign or bigger which may ...
See more at www.toddlockwood.com

Passion for pictures

New software New natural media package has a bargain price

Ambient Design has announced the release of ArtRage 2, the second version of its easy-to-use painting tool. The application can simulate oil paints, pencils, felt pens and other natural media, such as a palette knife, for producing special digital effects.

... as standard feature ... players. ArtRage ... ools. One is the reference ... a photo or similar to your canvas and use it as a guide image

... he program was created by two ... es of MetaC... ... publisher that once developed ... What makes ArtRage ... different is the way you don't need ... ... hat looks rea... ... Wilson "You just ...

or whatever ...

www.ambientdesign.com

Right: images ... Below: ArtRage ...

Expand your work area

New hardware Wacom introduces bigger tablets

Wacom has announced two new Intuos3 tablets aimed at digital artists, painters and designers.

... gest tablet in the ... and the company's ... wide format offering (see ... ... he Intuos3 A3 Wide ... ... es and has a ...

... company is the Intuos3 A4 Oversize. Primarily aimed at those producing ...

www.wacom.co.uk

ARTIST INSIGHT

"Without a graphics tablet, I'd cry a lot initially, then I'd probably do a lot more flat colours in my comic work, and I'd also paint with real paint then scan it all in."
– **Frazer Irving** Comic artist, Marvel, 2000AD

MirrorMask

Digital film A belated UK release for fantasy film – plus more comic-to-film adaptations…

MirrorMask, the first film directed by acclaimed comic artist Dave McKean, finally gets a UK cinema release in March. Written by McKean's long-time collaborator, Neil Gaiman, it's a modern fairytale in the grand tradition of The Dark Crystal and Labyrinth. It tells the story of a girl who longs to run away from the circus to join real life. On the way she enters the Dark Lands, which is full of giants, sphinxes and monkey birds.

www.mirrormask.com

> 66 **Plans are progressing to produce a manga prequel, written by Gaiman** 99

All work and no play makes...

Art advice It's important to keep a balance in your work, says artist Kieran Yanner..

If you're a struggling artist trying to make it professionally, it can be galling to see how much work commercial artists produce while maintaining quality.

"On a personal note I'm exploring

www.kieranyanner.com

> 66 Working as a commercial artist can 'suck you dry' – working on personal pieces counterbalances that effect 99

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact the editor, Rob Carney on **rob@imaginefx.com** or write to **ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK**

Some words of praise

I bought your magazine a couple of days ago and I'm pleased to see something I appreciate... to digital art... than trawling through every online art mag and the internet for snippets of advice. I hope to send something soon for EXPose. Many thanks to all involved.

Steve Bell, via email

I just want to say thanks for bringing us this absolutely awesome magazine. I buy a lot of digital magazines but I can say this is the BEST magazine I have ever come across and we read every single page. Keep up the good work and perhaps one day I might submit some of my work... when I am up to the standard of the digital art you show. You have a new subscriber! Keep up the good work. Many thanks

Martin Dexter, via email

Editor Rob Carney replies: Wow! What a response we've had. Thanks to everyone who has written. We appreciate all the feedback and criticism, so keep your letters coming! And don't forget to submit your artwork to EXPose – full details are on page 21.

Don't go changin'

Don't change a thing, it's nice to see a new mag. What you got is almost perfect. It's a mag at all levels and has a great mix of news, reviews, etc. Try not to go down the application route, but keep to the skill and technique threads that you have done such a wonderful job at. I know you have to use applications, but I don't think we all need to have lessons in them.

Small video tutorials on technique would be a great addition to the DVD, you know the stuff, five to 10 minutes

on painting skin or how to make great dragon textures.

Graham Hockaday, via email

Rob replies: Thanks for the kind words Graham. Video tutorials was an excellent idea – one that our heads had planned. Over the coming months, we'll be bringing you some video tutorials from the world's leading fantasy and sci-fi artists. So stay tuned! And if you want your video tutorials to be included on the DVD email the DVD editor, Tom, on **tom@imaginefx.com**

Where's the website?

When will there be starting a web page where readers can upload pics to.

Richard H Eagle, via email

Rob replies: Good question, Richard. We're currently working on a huge website featuring art galleries, forums, tutorials and reviews... check for announcements in the mag and at **www.imaginefx.com** soon.

Tutorial tips?

Thanks for bringing a magazine dedicated to the often forgotten art of fantasy. One thing though, I found Tim Warnock's tutorial to be incredibly hard using advanced techniques in Photoshop. Is there something I missed?

James Green, via email

Rob replies: Thanks for your comments, James. Tim's matte painting tutorial was a fairly intensive advanced in issue one. However, if you open up the Imagine X issue one DVD, you'll find a folder of Tim's work-in-progress images and photos along with the final Photoshop file. This will certainly help you get to grips with the techniques he used to create this incredible photo-realistic image.

Frazetta rules OK

Thanks for the piece on Frank Frazetta in issue one. He really is the godfather of fantasy art.

David Johnston, via email

Rob replies: We couldn't agree with you more, David. Frank Frazetta's a man who has inspired many artists. The equally inspiring Chris Foss is featured on page 54. Who else do you think should be showcased in our legends profile? Email me on **rob@imaginefx.com** with your suggestions.

Ignored by the establishment?

This is just a quick shout to say thanks...

Events

FANTASY & SCI-FI ART SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD

MAGICON, US
DATE: 10-12 March
URL: www.magic...

ICFA, US
DATE: 15-19 M...
URL: www...

FANTASICON, US
DATE: 17-19 March
URL: www.fan...

AGGIECON, US
DATE: 23-26 March
URL: www...

I-CON, US
DATE: 24-26 Mar...
URL: www.i-con...

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, PLEASE SEND US THE DETAILS. EMAIL THEM TO THE EDITOR AT: ROB@IMAGINEFX.COM

EMERALD CITY COMICON, SEATTLE, US
DATE: 1-2 A...
URL: www...
comicon.com

FROLICON, ATLANTA, US
DATE: 13-15 Apri...
URL: www...
+1 404 766 6660.

WORLD HORROR CONVENTION, SAN FRANCISCO, US
DATE:
URL: http://...
San Francisco Golden Gateway hotel. Call +1 415 441 4000.

NORTH AMERICA

SOUTH AMERICA

CONCUSSION, GLASGOW, UK

EUROCON, NEW UKRAINE

Last year I went to...

STEVE BENTLEY OF BRAINFREEZE DESIGNS REVIEWS EMERALD CITY COMICON 2005…

I have been to Seattle's comic con for the past few years and watched it expand from a smaller celebration of fandom to a large, well organised event. Typically for such things, even at a huge selection of vendors were selling the weird and wonderful. A fine array of comics, key chains and swords gap between was packed into the event hall, a salute to fandom everywhere.

Several of the major names in the entertainment industry were represented. Among the more famous were Marvel and Dark Horse, along with a sizable array of independent publishers, companies brought artists and producers who were delighted to offer advice to those wanting to learn and entertained. There were several gatherings around the more famous names, but smaller companies were easily accessible and offered good, solid advice to aspiring artists.

I've done much more than the art and the famous names. I remember the relaxed and fun atmosphere that is sometimes absent from the bigger conventions. The presenters seemed able to spend more time with fans, either than just running out autographs.

As always I enjoyed wandering around taking in the art demonstrations, people watching and browsing the stores. This year's event promises to be bigger and better, only hope is a laid mood can be maintained. **www.brainfreezedesigns.com**

Artist Q&A

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR PANEL OF DIGITAL ART GURUS.

The ImagineFX panel

SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS! SEE PAGE 43 FOR DETAILS

Steven Stahlberg
Steven has worked as a freelance illustrator and a computer graphic artist. He lives in Malaysia.
www.androidblues.com

Dan Seagmiller
Dan works as a freelance traditional and digital artist, teacher and art director. He lives in Utah, US.
www.imaginsmith.com

Henning Ludvigsen
Henning has 12 years' illustration, design and digital art experience. He is art director for a game developer in Greece.
www.henningludvigsen.com

George Hull
George's concept design clients include visual effects director of Matrix films. From Pacific Renge to his new....
www.ghull.com

Frazer Irving
Award-winning UK illustrator Frazer has worked for DC Comics, Heavy Metal, 2000AD, Heavy Enterprises and more.
www.frazerirving.com

Adam Benton
A freelancer, high-profile clients in advertising, publishing, science and much more. His love is sci-fi...
www.kromekat.com

Joanna Zhou
A student at Central College of Art & Design, award-winning freelance manga artist and seller of Sweatdrop Studios...
www.chocolatepixels.com

Question
How can I create comic 'starscapes' that don't just look like a load of white dots? *Adam Taylor, UK*

Answer
Frazer replies
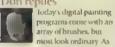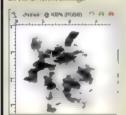
Step-by-step: Adding glowing stars…

Question

I hear and read so much about custom brushes in Photoshop. How do I create a custom brush and why would I want to? *Sarah Law, UK*

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Artist's secret

Answer
Don replies

Today's digital painting programs come with an array of brushes, but most look ordinary. As you gain confidence you'll want to create custom brushes. In most programs this is not difficult. The approaches vary slightly. Here are two of many controls in Photoshop CS2 for customising your new brushes. I encourage you to explore all the different settings.

1 create a small document on a white background, than 256x256 pixels, scribble a shape using standard brushes

2 remove denser areas with an eraser. To add more of Photoshop's filters on my brush to be

3 go to the Edit menu, scroll down through the choices and select Define Brush Preset. Up pops a dialogue brush with a preview image where can name my brush and click OK
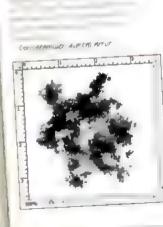
4 In the Brushes palette there is now a preview at the bottom of the brushes showing my new one. Here find basic information about my new brush, such as its size

Question
I like to ink my illustrations and manga pages by hand. What issues should I watch out for when I'm preparing them for digital rendering? *Tim Booth, US*

Answer

Although most digital artists can't live without the graphics tablet, I can't do without the graphics tablet, tricky to sketch, and when I draw on the screen... for this reason I always sketch my black outlines on paper and then scan them in. When setting up the scanning resolution, I aim for anywhere between 300 DPI and 600 DPI, the higher the better. Bitmap images take up less memory, so you may be able to go up in resolution.

Question
I love painting on the computer using Photoshop but I'm having trouble finding a tool that blends colours well. What do you advise? *Paolo Carletti, Italy*

Answer
Don replies

Question
How do I make explosions in comic art? *Jake McNamara, Ireland*

Answer
Frazer replies

Adding spot of colour with the Brush tool can help make best of debris and look more dramatic.

Question

I keep seeing cool images done with Global Illumination in other software. I know Bryce doesn't have this, but is there any way I can achieve this effect by forgery?

Al Patel, UK

Answer

[...] direct and [...] light in a scene [...] light dome [...] photo-realistic effects [...] can achieve something similar such as soft diffuse shadows and an even light throughout, with an array of normal lights. They need to be arranged in a hemispherical shape, emulating the global light from the sky. Several methods for creating a light dome can be found on the internet. You may be able to download some from Bryce-related sites, but to save you time I've created a couple of domes and examples here:

www.kromekat.com/freebies/bryce_lightdomes.zip

Because so many lights are used (more than 130 in this example) the individual materials need to be lowered down to around 2 to 5, depending on how you use other lights in the scene. You can click on [...] next to the light group and edit them all in one go.

Here, I have used just the light dome with white lights, then the same again but with a pale sky blue tinted dome and a yellow tinted sun. By toning so effectively, in effect, you can achieve the impression of an HDRI (high dynamic range illumination) effect.

For a better look, try duplicating the light dome and rotate it slightly to get a more accurate and smoother shadow pattern. However, with a textured surface you may not notice any artefacts anyway.

Light dome (white lights) | Light dome (blue) + sun (yellow) | with reflective objects

Step-by-step: How to create an explosion in Photoshop CS...

1 [...]
2 [...]
3 [...]
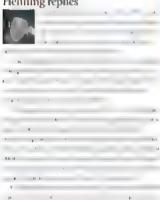
Question

When I paint in Photoshop, my images always seem too saturated and the shapes look like plastic. Can you give me any tips on how to make my digital art look less like it's computer generated, and more like a traditional painting? *Lou Jönsson, Denmark*

Answer

Henning replies

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Hard edged brush   Pencil brush

Step-by-step: Try different brushes, use light and shade carefully and add grain.
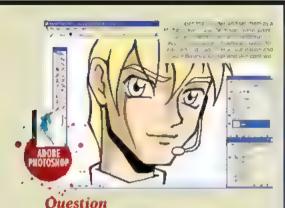
Soft brush   Hard edged brush   Pencil brush

1

2

3

Question

In manga art, cel-shading is mentioned a lot. What exactly is it and how can I achieve this style using Photoshop? *Linh Ruan, Vietnam*

Answer

Cel-shading originates from the way individual frames of a cartoon had to be drawn onto transparent plastic cels print to animation. Solid colour is easier to animate than gradations so it chose to use cel as this distinctive block shading... they were appearance... you can even be outside a gradient... applied... It's easy to imitate this style using graphics software. Although less time consuming than a real solid shaded picture, it will test your confidence on mark making and deciding where to lay down solid areas of light and shadow.

When applying... cel... shading... four... highlight... shadow. Having... an attractive... a cel shaded work before.

Question

What brushes are best for painting in Photoshop? Any tricks or shortcuts?
Ryan Castle, US

Answer

Steven replies

Question

I want to do fantasy scenes in Poser. The figures and clothing provided are not suitable. Where can I get decent fantasy extras for my Poser library? *Sam Jackson, UK*

Answer
Adam replies

You are in luck because the third party support for Poser is now enormous and there are quite a few websites selling high quality additions for your library.

These once were not just limited to clothing, either. You can buy a large variety of props, weapons, armour, textures, sets and environments. There are alternate original figures ranging from realistic humans to anime characters, goblins, trolls and dragons. The list seems endless.

What's more, the huge growth of the Poser community has added heathy competition among retailers. Which is why today, artists are far more selective and original than ever with their images.

One of the premiere Poser third party websites at the moment is **www.daz3d.com**. It supplies many

alternate original human figures. Many other sites provide content props and accessories for it, such as **www.renderosity.com**, **www.runtimedna.com** and **www.poserpros.com**.

Most of these sites have freebies sections that are useful for your creative endeavours. Consider doing a search on Google for Poser, but be warned, your credit card might not thank you.

> 66 Most third party sites have a freebies section, useful for your creative endeavours 99

The figures and some of the props and environments to be found on DazStudio

Question

When I combine background and foreground objects they look too much like a cut and paste job. How can I make them look more like they fit together in the same scene?
Julian Campbell, Scotland

Answer
Henning replies

Consistency in the use of colours and ambient light, along with consistency in the angles of light sources and shadows, are what makes different elements work together in the same picture. The light is out what kind of ambient light you have. Then adjust. The has been decided, adjust the colours on the pasted-on object to fit the background. I prefer using Colour balance (Ctrl+B in Photoshop for Windows) to adjust the colours.

Make sure the angles of the light sources and shadows are the same in

the background and foreground. Take care of this before you combine the two elements because inconsistent light sources and shadows in different elements can really break a piece.

In the pictures here the background is a cold blue ambient colour while the pasted-on girl is a warm, golden hue. I want to keep the cold light, so I'll adjust the layer with the girl to make it appear colder.

When combining elements like this, it's important to have a good edge of the pasted element. If, for example the hair that's been cut out is too rough or too sharp it will look weird. You can also try going over the picture and softening edges by brushing out with the rubber tool using a soft brush on low flow.

Question
What steps can I take to improve at doing fast colour conceptual sketches? *Mark Bailey, UK*

Answer
George replies

Step-by-step: Feed lots of fast ideas to movie directors with your sketches.

❶

❷

❸

Marta Dahlig

Dark owl Marta Dahlig likes to develop her characters in the dead of night…

Our rising star of fantasy this issue has been inhabiting a fairly dark world, rife with sin. Marta Dahlig has risen to prominence on the back of exquisitely detailed gothic-tinged work. More recently we've witnessed her ambitious project to put a face to the seven deadly sins. One of these was included in Ballistic Publishing's recent Painter book.

Working from a base in Warsaw, the 20-year-old says she is first and foremost a person who prefers to let the creative juices run wild in the dead of night. This approach clearly gives her more spectral images a suitably nocturnal feel. "I love to stay up late with a cup of steaming coffee. Only then, in the dark, can I concentrate fully on painting," Marta confides.

She says the Seven Deadly Sins series has been her most wide-reaching project to date. Combining imposing characters with a distinct art nouveau feel, the series has an ambitious scope. "The idea came to me spontaneously," she explains. "I researched the topic on the web to find out more about each of the sins. I've always been a fan of art nouveau, so it didn't take me long to decide that my bias would draw on this style. Each painting, aside from the time spent on planning and designing, in my head, took me around 60 hours."

Aside from the art nouveau influence, Marta draws on an impressive colour palette to give her work depth and additional feeling. So how important is colour to the way she goes about painting her characters? "To me, colours are one of the key elements of any painting," Marta confirms. "They define it. I usually spend quite a lot of time

thinking if a colour scheme is suited to the mood and the desired feelings I want to provoke. I use dark shades and contrasts for a vigil, easy-going colours for a peaceful mood and greyish-blue colours for sadness.

Besides subtle use of colour, another striking feature of her work is its disarming sympathy for the human face. "I pay especial attention to the sorrow and the expression. In terms of faces, I get them from my mind in most cases. Sometimes when I need some anatomical reference I make my family members pose for me."

Although much of the young artist's work has a strong painterly feel, technology obviously plays an important part in how her images are created, being both Painter and Photoshop CS as her main software tools, combined with a Wacom-branded graphics tablet, Marta says she uses a wide palette of effects and brushes.

"My favourite tools in Painter are the Basic Round Brush and Blender tools. Using Opaque Round Brush from Oils and Fine Point from Inking Tools. In Photoshop I use the Hard Round tool as well as my custom Speckled Brush," she says.

Marta's waiting to see where her debut in the well-received Ballistic book will take her next. For now, she's pleased to end her emersion in the world of sin, especially envy. Envy's the worst sin she scores. "To me, this sin means acting against the person who possesses what we want, cunning, hurting and backstabbing on the sheer fact of someone being more lucky. Other deadly sins except wrath are mostly destructive to the actual sinners whereas envy makes innocent ones suffer. ●
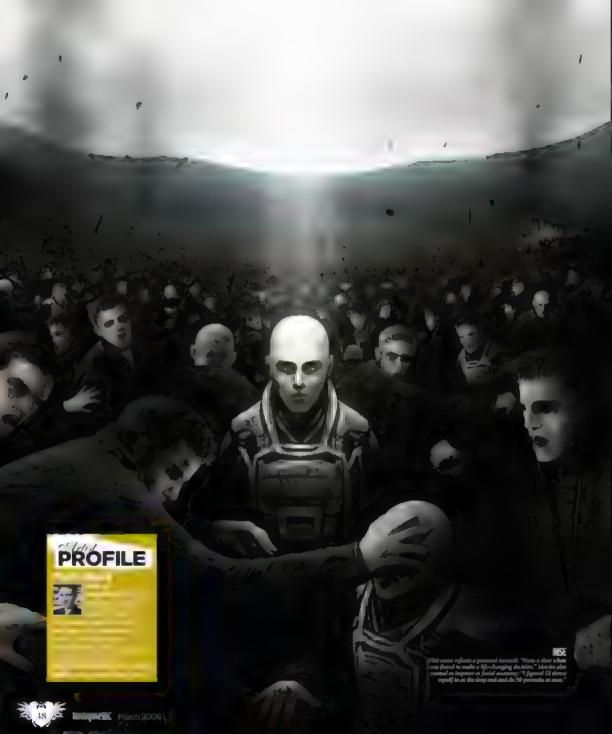
THE PREDATOR
"A piece that started out as a monochromatic sketch, I took an obsessive amount of time on the rendering."

This scene reflects a personal turmoil: "From a time when was forced to make a life-changing decision." Marcin also wanted to improve at facial anatomy: "I figured I'd throw myself in at the deep end and do 50 portraits at once."

The art of
MARTIN BLAND

Reckon you can knock up a futuristic masterpiece in about an hour? That's what self-taught conceptual 'speed-painter' Martin Bland does..

Currently hard at work on what he describes as a "religiously questionable death metal CD" cover," Martin Bland conjures up a digital wonderland of a very particular nature. His work is not exactly gothic, or even dystopic, it's about a personal vision of where he thinks we're all heading: "I do have post-apocalyptic tendencies," he admits. "I'm not one for the fancy colourful visions we've been fed of future life. It'll be a lot more gritty and more subtle than what's expected." This future is largely conceived in the dark. "I think best at night."

His astonishingly rapid rise from being a novice to a freelance concept and fine artist for the music, entertainment and publishing industries has been faster than anyone would take to do a degree. Martin taught himself all he needed to know to produce the impressive images on these pages. But Wacom gets a nod of recognition too – Martin only returned to illustration three years ago when he got a graphics tablet as a well-chosen gift. "I've never looked back," he smiles.

Martin had in fact been drawing from an early age. "I did a lot of pencil work until the age of about 16, when the social life took hold," he recalls. It's a common pattern, but those early years meant his artistic basis has always been there. By the time the question of a career was on the table, Martin's illustration skills had been gathering dust for a while so he started out in the printing industry. "I went from lithographic printer through to print manager in 10 years," he says. Although it wasn't a true calling, it did entrench a few worthwhile values: "Attention to detail, composition and colour sense."

The return to the fold began recently, only really got back into it when I got the internet seven years ago, through the weird world of chat rooms." It started innocently enough, with the creation of animated GIFs but before long Martin was onto the hard stuff: "Via web design I got into digital art."

VISION

So what brings about the somewhat eldritch tint of these future visions? "I'm not entirely sure," confesses Martin. "I tend to paint what's deep-seated in my imagination, so I usually surprise myself with what comes out." He elaborates: "It's how I'm viewing current events and my own fears of the ➤➤

LUCINDE
"This is how I see my other half," Martin reveals. "Commanding and unspoken away at times, but ultimately as sexy as hell."

THE ARTIST
A cold shell of a post-industrial wasteland seemed a fitting stage to find Martin Bland and ask him more about his apocalypse-inspired leanings.

Having a child amplifies your awareness of things too. The process of translating the world into paint is as old as mankind, but Martin's process is amplified by working

...family portraits. It's been that way from the...

LEARNING

Martin is self...

> **I 'speed-paint' at least one hour a day, sometimes packing in 10 images. I don't usually even save the results**

Martin's work brilliant... ... the rose-tinted future we... ... world where there might not be a happy ending. Just like the real one... ... out imagery of realistic scena... ... than painting a shiny spaceman or an... ... escapism just doesn't do it for me. I like... imagine worlds people can truly conne... with. I want people to see parallels."

Martin's visions relate to common experiences: "Things aren't sugar coated and brightly coloured, they have an edge, I like to explore those edges. The world's political climate as of the past few years [] been kind of 'on edge'. Those fears have a natural tendency to slip into what I'm doing...

...is most people, emotions. Forwar... ...thinking is certainly a good thing, but... ...doesn't preclude the notices of other... ...avenues, Martin accepts. "I'm glad to be... ...example that the little guy can do okay, an... And he's doing better than okay, as the ...here show. It's hard to believe they... ...the product of just three years practice.

"The best advice I can give is to practice... ...some things out yourself, don't like t... ...no tomorrow and explore the wealth of... ...information out there...

THE APOCALYPSE

As with much of his work... ...months didn't really start with a...

LESA
After the inspiring scene in Shortino's latest picture. "I have a signature to avoid running through the whole plate and up the highlights later in this piece"

THE MEDUSA FIELDS

THE INIQUIT

"He is here to relieve you of your sins," advises Marcus. "Stand before him and have your soul renewed."

conventional sketch – it was more of a voyage of [...] [...] working on forms and planes rather than lines. I build up an image as I go, blocking in shapes and finding forms in there to work with," he explains.

"I usually have a base painting done in around an hour. It won't usually change much apart from being more refined at the final stage." So is that because of a very clear vision or large amounts of practice? "I speed-paint at least one hour a day, sometimes packing in [...] [...] gestural drawing, only cooler. I don't usually even save the results." This is the stage at which the raw material is generated. "If it doesn't look great after an hour I scrap it and move on. Sometimes I come out with some nice imagery that I work on further."

Posting these images online as they develop has kept Martin's development on-

But he's understanding of [...] [...] the planning stage." This would help break the fine information you'd get from a lot of people, but not Martin. For that reason alone you're inclined to believe his idea would make a good film.

Martin assures us he's "excited and passionate enough to follow it through some day." For now though, it's had to take a back seat to commercial work. "I seem to have been in demand recently so I haven't had the personal time to put into it." That's something he'll have to get used to.

> 🍏 **The world's political climate as of the past few years has been 'on edge.' Those fears slip into what I'm doing** 💚

track. "I post alongside a lot of big guns in the concept art industry every day and see how they all work, from sketch to final, on some major projects. That's enough to make me humble."

FUTURE PERFECT

Perhaps it is because Martin has moved from hobbyist to pro so quickly that he is philosophical about the whole career thing: "I haven't thought that far ahead to be honest, I just take it one day at a time." He doesn't lack ambition though. "I'd love to work on a sci-fi blockbuster, something huge so my kid can brag at school." Martin has been approached by an agent after pitching a story idea to a Hollywood studio.

pr [...] *Martin Bland's*
VITAL STATISTICS
Picture a hybrid of Ghandi and a sea monkey...

Place of birth
Swindon, Wiltshire

Date of birth
April 10, 1973

Favourite film or scene from a movie
Opening scene of [...] [...] stunning.

Favourite kind of music
Radiohead, Tricky, through to Aphex Twin, Autechre, a mixed bag of India/punk/trishhop/industrial. I don't really have a favourite genre

Favourite traditional artist
Whistler. I love the darkness in his imagery.

Favourite digital artist
Craig Mullins, Stan Sretauer, HPX, Spartis [...] I could [...]

First memory
Being chased [...] Human imp [...]

First love
Bernice, my partner

Most prized possession
My son isn't really a possession is he? So it's be my Wacom.

Average time spent on an image
Around 15 hours.

Figure from history you most identify with
Ghandi

Single most important piece of professional advice
Stick to your principles and be honest.

Left or right-handed?
Right.

Any views on the afterlife
I'm sure there's something there. I'm not very religious but I respect others' beliefs. If there is an afterlife, I'd like to come back as a sea monkey.

What is your motto?
It's not about the artist, it's about the art.

Any grand plans?
I'd like to publish my own graphic novel one day and pitch for a movie on its strength. It's by far my favourite illustration job. I've been building a little universe for a couple of years and a lot of my personal images are tied into the story line

Chris Foss

An artist who changed the future, drawing what didn't exist
when film companies were feeling their way into sci-fi.

It's hard to overstate the influence Chris Foss has had on our collective vision of the future. If you have any classic SF books, chances are you have classic Foss. If you're making art prints you'd know his F4 work better than an Alien or Superman.

Until he arrived on the scene, the future was a needle sharp, sleek-looking place that got less and less human. Chris introduced us to a human future, where space ships were "rumbling bumbling bangy things with bits of metal hanging off." People responded with wide-eyed recognition.

FALSE START

"All I ever wanted to do was be an artist," Chris recalls. Like parents the world over, the Fosses were sceptical about the value of an art school education. "They fought me tooth and nail," recalls Chris. "Their argument was that once you have a degree, you can go and do your art stuff." He adds, "My parents were struggling, whose teachers. Their mum bought a Picasso by accident in a drapers shop. She was terrific at rooting and ferreting."

The pressure was too much for young Chris, and just as the 60s started swinging he ended up in Cambridge studying architecture. This was a mistake though: "I went to two lectures in two years and by the end of the second was drawing cartoon strips for Penthouse."

ROOM WITH A VIEW

You see Chris has more than one feather to his cap. "My first break was with erotic artwork," he says. "Because that's what they wanted at Bob Guccione's new magazine Penthouse." And strangely, once you know of this other side you can see that it somehow suffuses the SF images too.

It also explains something of the magic behind the peculiar Foss vision of the future. For me a giant spaceship would have topless female stokers shovelling in nuclear nuts," laughs Chris. "Whereas for other people it was the Z-drive."

An intimate familiarity with the human form, not just as an object but as a sexual form produces an organic way of seeing the world. Chris makes no attempt to imagine himself as a robot or an AI. "I'm perfectly aware that technology advances in leaps and bounds," he points out. "I'm just amiably waiting on the side lines for the most usable bits of technology."

OLD JUMBO JETS

Chris has produced covers for just about every classic SF author — Philip K Dick, Heinlein, and he was the Asimov man for a long time. In the 1970s, Chris was the source of SF imagery. "JG Ballard too. I did a lot of his covers."

An editor at Penthouse guided Chris to recruit an agent, as he was being limited by the work he was getting on the magazine. "The first big job I got was for the Sunday Times, illustrating an article by Stan Kubrick on ESP."

The thing was, Chris didn't need a photo reference. "The guy I went to see at Pan books was overjoyed. He said 'Thank God, I can finally have spaceships!'" This ushered in a golden era: "The publishers were all located in and around Soho so we used to drink in this lovely little pub on Poland Street with the various art directors."

FROM DUNE TO ALIEN

Drawing for Penthouse while still at university, cover artist to the SF aristocracy, what next? "They were casting about for an artist to illustrate this book by Alex Comfort." So Chris drew the illustrations for The Joy of Sex. Exciting as that was, it was not the zenith. "That began when I started on Dune with Alejandro Jodorowsky." This maverick genius had bought the rights to Frank Herbert's masterpiece and convinced a French industrialist to make it.

"Somewhere out there is this huge book with the entire storyboard in it," muses the artist. When Dune was canned by shortsighted Hollywood execs, Chris didn't miss a beat, he'd already been commissioned to do the artwork for another classic Superman.

While Chris was still on a high with the caped crusader, Jodorowsky pulled a rabbit out of his hat. "The work we did for Dune ended up as the basis for Alien." Mr Foss, take a bow, your place in history is assured.

A prolific artist, Chris continues to expand his universe in many directions while attempting to marry the two threads of his work — erotic and futuristic. "People like me are the filters," he ponders. "We take in everything around us and out the other end come these images."

ROBOTS OF DAWN
Highlighting Chris' deft ability with character, this little chap looks as if he could run away if he doesn't get his own way.

RAILRUNNER
From the classic Chris Foss Portfolio, perhaps an example of this technology Chris is "waiting amiably for the world to develop.

CAPTAIN NEMO'S CASTLE
Again from *Diary of a Space Person*, this one shows how well Chris has developed his use of strong lighting to add drama.

"The first big job I got was for the Sunday Times, illustrating an article by Stan Kubrick on ESP"

BLUE SPACE WRECK
Again from Chris' *Diary of a Space Person*, this is a good example of the artist's ability to capture a great sense of scale.

KUANG HONG

thoughts that could in any event hide... ...ce... Kuang Hong
...dream... ...nd alternativ... realiti...

elodrama lives and breathes in the pixels of Kuang Hong's rich and imaginative illustrations. He must have an old head on his young shoulders. His work has both the air of a true compositional trust and the energy of youth, a fuse that has...

[text illegible]

2B OR NOT 2B

[text illegible]

MY WORLD

"When I'm painting, I just let it flow"

AUTUMN

A girl gets lost. Frost settles down, a bright party... feeling an autumn song with her heart.

and I loved the brushes. They seemed so real! I've been working digitally for five years now."

Today, Kuang lives and works in Beijing, as an art director for an online game company. He works large on character and environmental illustrations and concept designs, but speaks of his work with characteristic modesty. "I'm pretty satisfied with the characters. The environments are at the experimental stage, but I feel confident in general."

Not having been drilled in the traditional school, Kuang took to the new media with relish, but he still loves things drawn by a pencil. "I love sketching with pencils so usually I draw plenty of studies. This gives the artist a chance to work out the details of an environment.

"Pieces that will be coloured are sketched with a blue pencil first and then the forms are further defined by a 2B pencil. Then the

studies are scanned and completed digitally. Although he has obviously got the technical aspects locked down, Kuang is aware that Painter skills alone do not make an artist.

A WISE IDEA

"Techniques are important, but on their own they accomplish nothing, it's the ideas that matter," he stresses. Of course it is important to strike a balance. "Even if you have the best ideas in the world, you won't be able to communicate them without the basic painting skills. Whenever I'm free, I must practise as much as I can, studying perspectives and shadow."

The reason denying that we all need a certain amount of technical sense, but as Kuang points out, "If there's only technical strength and you draw every image like a photograph, then you might as well become a photographer."

❝ Game development isn't all it could be in China. There are lots of people unsure of their direction. It's a messy crowd ❞

YINYANG

When I look at the characters now I like illusions sometimes, as if they're really trying to say something to me.

Artist portfolio

PATRICK JANICKE

The concept artist behind Blade and Stargate fall life and making it just that bit more fantastic

P

STYLE

SHINY THINGS

Patrick's work centres on darkly menacing future-tech. It's the kind of superhero and super-villain machinery that comes with a serious health warning. "But that's n really me," he claims. "It's some something that just happens. I alway enjoyed sci-fi movies. I never read the books though." What is he most proud of "The freeze gun I designed for Mister Freeze in Batman & Robin. And the Batbike, because I love motorcycles." He's a comic buff too, of the European variety, "Like Tintin. They actually tell stories."

His sci-fi movie capers involve desires to make things the world isn't ready for. As

MR FREEZE
One of Patrick's ideas for Mr Freeze's rocket pack from Batman and Robin

THE FANTASTIC FOUR
Tooling up Mister Fantastic

Patrick's website has two entries for the Fantastic Four. The first attempt to make the movie was aborted in favour of Spiderman. This left Patrick and production designer Bill Boews "totally bummed." Timely returned in 2004 wanted it to have the Kirby... wanted it to look retro... retro stuff," he says. ...

There was ... staging ... "The storyboard guy would come with landscape ... would ... ... pick ... repaint and use the print ... art of his model to draw on." The ... description is kind of vague, Patrick confesses.

Mister Fantastic has Patrick to thank for his lab atop the Baxter building, or part of it at least. "I... I did this transformation chamber, kind of like an enlarged phone booth," he reveals. "You go in as a human and come out with ... powers." He also left a ... hand to Dr Doom's member dec... but ... tested different ...

... the concept art ... a ... twist by three years. Before a movie hits the cinema, that be the unsung hero. "Concept designers ... get forgotten" ... it ... be getting ... "... W...

FANTASTIC FOUR ... GES

Patrick's original vision for the ... interior of a life ... "Anyone who's seen the ... will know the ... Visit his website at ... ... props... ... ept ... ... for the original 2000 produc... ... more art from the 2004 release...

He likes making golden tobomb... and killer motorbikes, he gets asked to do them repeatedly. But sighs: "I can't have my mum watch the movies I work on."

DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE

Patrick's illustrations have a beautifully hand-... ... ... This is where he gets ... kicks. "I really love to draw ... ... where inks get into each other and look messy. I prefer when you can see that the paper has a tooth to it and the pencil is a little rough." He believes ... ... illustrators, if they use Photoshop too much, they lose their style. It's getting harder for me to recognise the work of my peers," while he accepts it ... huge advantage, it brings with ... homogenisations in style. The trick is to take just what you need, not to become reliant. "The artwork on sci-fi and ... movies is often spectacular. Many ... ... a job has more beautiful work ... ... there than in any other. Very ... ... like Patrick's ... important is that his vision is his own. He's suited to sci-fi, but not because he's copied the textbook method for drawing space aliens. It's because he hasn't.

> 66 In Berlin, I designed this crazy boombox once... They said 'Go to Disney land or something' 99

Mr. Fantastic's Car ...

PROFILE
Patrick Jänicke
Age: ...

FXPosé Pro

SHOWCASING PROFESSIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Kerem Beyit

LOCATION Turkey
WEB http://kerembeyit.gfxartist.com/
EMAIL kerembeyit@hotmail.com
JOB Concept designer, Cixdot Studios

Kerem takes us way back When I was a little boy, I was in the barber and waiting for my turn. I was so bored. So my dad bought me an issue of Conan: Savage Sword of Conan. In fact, I still remember the cover art. I think that was the first spark. The artist was Bob Larkin. I'd love to thank him, muses Kerem. He works in Photoshop 7 and CS2.

1 WHITE TIGER CLAN This character was designed by Kerem for the game Sovereign Symphony

2 GALON CITY This architectural design was a concept illustration also produced for Sovereign Symphony. Kerem used Photoshop and a Wacom Cintiq 21UX

3 THE DWELLERS OF THE RED FOREST Made for The Catalogue Of Fantastic Literature, from Phoenix Publishing, this one took 30 hours

Anthony Scott Waters

US
www.thinktankstudios.com
blightmere@thinktankstudios.com
Freelance concept designer
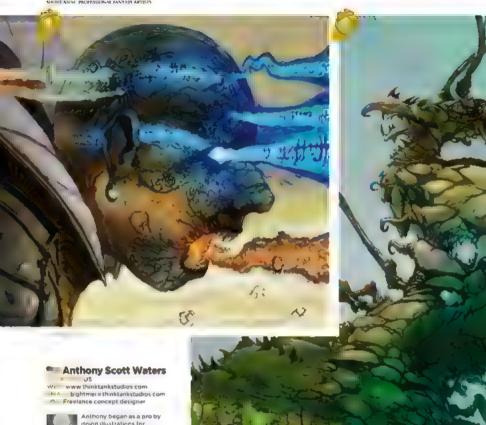
Anthony began as a pro by doing illustrations for Encarta, Microsoft's CD encyclopaedia, back in 1992. "It wasn't until 1997 that I could claim to be making my living entirely from the generation of fantasy art," he says. In 2000, Anthony convinced his art director, Dana Knutson, to let him try producing his Magic art assignments digitally. "I owe my career as a digital artist to Dana. I've been happily exploring this new form of media ever since." Anthony works in Photoshop 6 and Painter 8, with an Apple G4 dual 500, on OS 9.1

1 HINDER "This piece was commissioned to illustrate a spell countering another spell so thoroughly that the opponent's memory is temporarily wiped clean," Anthony explains. "If you look closely you see the blue glyphs forcing the black ones out of the back of the caster's head."

2 LIVING HIVE "I rarely turn down the chance to draw something weird," admits Anthony. "This is a massive creature made up of millions of bugs."

🇺🇸 Edward Lee

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Ed trained as a fine art illustrator at the famous Pratt Institute in New York. But soon fell into the animation business, designing characters and backgrounds for a television series he says. Ed was first exposed to computer graphics in the 80s, but says "I moved out to Los Angeles and got a job as a production designer at Rhythm and Hues. That forever changed how I looked at 3D." It was from here that Ed really took hold of Painter, Photoshop and 3ds max to bring his visions to life.

1 NEXT Created to accompany a print ad for a company manufacturing PC gaming machines. "This one portrays an axe-wielding bad-ass leading an army over a fiery lava field." 3ds max, Photoshop and Painter were used.

2 ICE CAVE The concept art for ATI's ad Ruby depicts a "special headquarters set in an ice-cave." Created with Photoshop and Painter ●

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Photoshop
APOCALYPTIC VISIONS

Step aboard **Martin Bland**'s tour of how to paint chilling scenes in Photoshop, from concept sketch to final print-ready image.

ainting is something that takes practice, but if you have artistic ability, Photoshop offers up an exciting medium that is not only cleaner than traditional methods, but saves you time too. That's probably why it's the choice of conceptual artists worldwide.

This tutorial lays out the techniques you need to create full scenes, using nothing more than your imagination, Photoshop's default brushes and a graphics tablet with pressure sensitivity.

To start with, you need to know what you're going to paint. The more time you put into planning, the less time you spend painting, and you lessen the chance of mistakes. For this image, I had a good idea what to paint beforehand; I was given the final size and I had a few of my own similar paintings to go on as a style guide.

Use a brief and have a strong idea before going into the image. You can form your concept in a number of ways, either thumbnail (paint a number of tiny sketches to test out composition and colour) or go straight in with a full sketch, and then you can complete an image if you're happy with your sketch.

I'm usually too impatient to work on 10 thumbnails, so I prefer to go straight in with a full sketch, then, if it doesn't work, I only lose an hour, but if it does work, I gain that time I would have used in planning. This keeps things fluid and interesting for me. Besides, the more full sketches you do, the better you get through practice.

A blank canvas

I always start out with the final sized canvas, set to 72 DPI (in this case 480x290mm) and block in a background with a large hard round paintbrush. Set the brush to opacity (everything unticked in the Brushes palette and the Opacity and Flow controls set to Pen Pressure in Other Dynamics).

With this being a wide-format image, I want to break up the horizontal feel, so I decide on a sweeping horizon. I'm going for a dark scene, so the colours I'm planning on will reflect this. The black background is a good base for this style and the green hue gives it more of a fantasy theme.

The environment layer

I creat a new layer for the next part. I usually stick to just a few editable layers for easy handling later on. Be careful, because it's easy to keep adding until you have hundreds of layers, but it bloats out the psd and is unnecessary. Keep it simple and it'll stay that way. As I plan to add a character to the right, I need to balance it

PRO SECRETS

out, so I decide to paint in a building on the left.

Introducing a few background areas gives the image an illusion of depth which can be added to later. I use the same settings as before, but change the brush size from large to small as I go, because it's better to block in larger areas and then tighten them up with smaller brushes. This is our basic environment.

The character layer

The third layer is for the character. I block in his basic shape in black and add a grey highlight area with his basic features. I bring him forward to give more impact to the image, because I want him to be the main focal point, while also balancing him with the building to the left.

I want to guide the eye around the image so a strong character up front will grab the attention, while the secondary point will fade back, before merging into the horizon.

Secondary character

Still working on the character layer, I start work on the features, general colours and lighting direction. Keeping things loose, and still working with the standard hard round brush, I build up body form and add the secondary character.

As I have chosen the theme of Aegis the Protector, having someone fragile in the scene adds more of an emotional element. It's always good to portray a story or plot in your image because this provides more interest for the viewer.

Adding details

Next, I create a detail layer, for tightening up and adding more areas of interest. The rock wall in the foreground fills the area of negative space and places more attention onto the main character. Think about how your image composition flows and flip your image horizontally (Image>Rotate>Flip canvas horizontally). These are good habits to get into. If you're right-handed you'll probably have a natural tendency to skew the image slightly to the right, and vice versa if you're left-handed. When you view your image flipped, you can counteract that problem and fix any errors. This trick is particularly useful when doing portrait shots.

Sketch finished

The sketch stage is over. I took around 45 minutes to get this far, but don't be surprised if it takes longer. Two hours would be a good cut-off point before deciding on whether you want to work on it further. Once you get to this stage, and you are happy with what you've done so far, it's time to enlarge the image. I change the DPI from 72 to 300, without touching the physical image size. This gives a print-ready size to work with, while keeping my original dimensions intact.

Rendering

Now comes the rendering stage, where you zoom in and do the same thing over the top of what you have, gradually building up detail levels as you go. I usually start with my focal point – the main character's face – and zoom in to 100 per cent to render up his features.

I have kept a copy of the sketch open to use as a reference, to ensure I don't lose the original feel as I progress. I open a new window for my image (Window> Arrange>New window for "filename". psd). This enables me to see the whole image with one click, rather than have to zoom in and out constantly to see what I'm doing. This is why the two background images are in there. Usually I'd drag them onto my second monitor, because with CS2 I can drag windows outside the boundaries of the program. This is a great tip for dual monitor users.

Lifelike features

I block in his features, roughly with the same hard round brush. To give him a bit more life and prevent the image from becoming too monotone, I use warm shades over the highlighted areas (pinks, reds and browns) with cool shades in the shadowed areas (blues and purples), over the top of the basic skintone colour that the lighting has given me (green and yellow tones). Although this is a muted scene as far as colour goes, it's important to add variance to make it a believable scene. Flipping my image at this stage helps with the proportions and positioning of his facial features.

Realistic lighting

Moving down the main character, I do the same thing with his shoulder armour and jewellery, painting over the top and generally tightening it up. It is my focal point, so I want to render this small area first, to judge how the lighting affects the rest of the scene. I consider how the light will react to different surfaces. His dull bronze armour reflects less light than his jewellery and marginally less than his skin.

Background

With my focal point in place, I begin to fill out the scene by roughly rendering the building. For the straight lines, I turn off Opacity in the Brush settings (untick Other Dynamics), click at my starting point, hold down Shift and click again where I want my line to end, giving me a perfect straight edge. Using less contrast on the building than the focal point gives a better feeling of depth, because the further away something gets the less vibrant it becomes.

Smoothing out

Carrying on from the last step, I continue to smooth out the form of my main building and begin tightening the outlines of the background cityscape. I start to work a little on the ground, using the Smudge tool (set to opacity, the same as my brushes) and a large soft airbrush, I smooth out the roughness and remove any visible brushmarks left behind from my sketch, using the Colour Picker and picking up tones from the ground as I go.

With the Smudge tool, I then make horizontal sweeps across the image, closer together at the back and moving further apart as I come forward. This gives an uneven appearance that works better than if you were to use a brush and paint shadows and highlights.

Fluffy sky

Next, I move to the background layer and apply a similar method to smooth out the sky. First, I choose a large hard round smudge (about 100pt) and drag it around a little using small strokes, but just enough to nudge the pixels into large tufts.

It's time to move in with the airbrush. This process removes the roughness of the sketch and gives your sky a more fluffy look. Most of this work will eventually get painted over, but it gives you more control over cloud formations than if you started on a very smooth gradient. If you zoom in 100 per cent, you can see the rough areas that need to be fixed.

Once I have completed a basic sky, I go over it with a large soft-edged brush, set to opacity again, picking up colours from the background and generally smoothing things out.

Tufts of cloud

I select a hard round smudge tool of 60pt to start work on the clouds. I gently move little areas around, creating small tufts to give the illusion of a cloud formation. I zoom out to 50 per cent for this, so I can see the whole sky.

It takes a little while before you see your formation in place, but once you're happy, zoom in to 100 per cent and repeat the process with a smaller smudge (around 20pt) and tidy up the edges. Small strokes will create realistic-looking tufts of cloud. You can spend as little or as long as you like on this stage, but with a little more patience you can create dramatic skies.

Perfect face

Now my background has gone through a full rendering pass, I move back onto my main focal point – the characters. I start by getting the girl's face in place, because it's an integral part of the image. I decide it's necessary to get her finished before moving onto anything else. I prefer to flit between areas, painting small pieces at a time, because it helps to bring the image together as a whole and unify the lighting and mood.

Adding texture

Back to my main building, it's time to give it some texture. Using a small 3-5pt brush, I start painting in some brickwork using a dark colour, which I choose from my shadowed area to the left. This breaks up the flatness that had let down the illustration until this point. The result is an image with more life. Once my brickwork is in place, I pick out highlights in the same way as before, but use the lightest colour on the building.

Unified shadows

With a small brush I start to unify the shadows where the building meets the ground. I adopt horizontal strokes, to add more detail to the ground and make the building look more natural, placed in their environment. I bring the sky and background together with a large

soft airbrush, painting delicately over the horizon and making it lighter as it goes back.

Finishing off

Finally, I return to the characters and render the cloth surrounding them. I pay close attention at this stage to the contrasts. For this stage, it's worth zooming right in and using one colour as my darkest shadow. Never use pure black because it's the most difficult shade to judge. Besides, while it might look good on one screen, on another you can almost guarantee it will stick out.

I check over my work and remove any streaks of colour that should not be there then I unify my shadows. I start to add the finishing touches of detail to bring the image together, for example, the rock wall in the foreground, small stones on the floor and the wishing well.

We're now really close to completion. I decide that the only things I need to add are some more debris and blowing leaves to give it more atmosphere. I create these leaves by simply blocking in leaf shapes and using the Motion Blur filter to give them a little 'movement.' And of course, I finish off his sword.

Photoshop

PERFECT
BRUSHES

make the most of Photoshop's brushes — create exciting new and professional brush library. by **Jonny Duddle**

1 Rough sketch

At this stage, I begin to sketch digitally, using the Conté Pencil brush which is one of Photoshop's Dry Media brushes. I use as I work I ensure the sketch has a real pencil look. Then I create another layer below the sketch and work on ideas for lighting in greyscale. I use Photoshop's Chalk brushes for this stage with set Opacity set to Pen Pressure.

2 Laying down the base colours

Once I've got a better idea of the tonal values of the composition, I start laying down some base colour. I create a new layer above the line drawing, set to Blend

mode to Overlay, and swap some colour down over the greyscale underneath. This is put together to form a base palette. Then I create another layer and start painting over the line drawing with more opaque marks. This will become my main colour layer. At this stage I'm only concerned with the colours and I don't give much dealt of thought to brush marks or texture.

3 Thinking about brushes

Photoshop provides a huge variety of different brushes. With the tools available and a number of ways to create new ones is bewildering. I think it's a good idea when you're doing new to Photoshop to look at other digital

artists who use the software and analyse their brushes and techniques. Some artists even provide downloadable brush marks from brushes that you'd make marks to textures I want in my illustrations. If you experiment with Photoshop's existing brushes you can easily work out ones are useful to you.

4 Editing the Brushes palette

When I'm creating a new Brushes palette I first get rid of all the brushes I don't need. There's no point scrolling through endless brushes that I never use. It's worth looking up all Photoshop's separate brushes and unlocking the different brushes and tip shapes. to the best way of whittling down a brush library is to use the Preset Manager. Open into the Brushes palette or use the fl but menu, and use it to delete large numbers of brushes at once.

5 Define brush presets

This is where the real fun begins. To make new brushes, I create a new image with a white background and make a wide variety of marks in black or grey using my existing Photoshop brushes. Once I've got some interesting shapes and textures, I start creating the new brushes. The first step is to make a marquee selection around one of the marks (hold

Managing brush palettes

I've mentioned the Preset Manager but I wanted to reiterate the importance of keeping your brush libraries organised. Think carefully about your workflow and how you use brushes. It can be irritating and time consuming to search for one favourite brush among hundreds of barely used brush presets. Avoid this by using the Preset Manager and the Brushes palette to organise your libraries. I have my favourite and most commonly used brushes at the top of my palette which makes the task of selecting brushes quick and easy (usually with the button on my Wacom pen). I have several brush libraries for different types of work. Everything is quicker when you're organised

8 Other dynamics
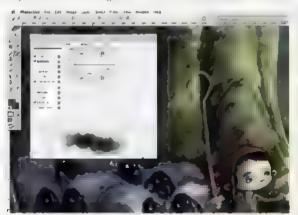
This section includes the control for opacity, which is probably the most important control in the palette. If you are using a tablet and pen, the opacity control is set here. Try setting the Control option, below the Opacity Jitter slider, to Pen Pressure. Moving the slider for Opacity Jitter can give interesting textures to your brush strokes. If I'm creating new brushes while producing an illustration or concept, I find it can be useful to create a small image to test potential brushes while I tweak settings and sliders.

9 Shape dynamics and scattering

These two sets of options provide lots of scope for experiment. Scattering does exactly what it says, and can make many small brush tips into large sponge-like textured brush tips. It's worth playing around with all the settings in these two palettes to see how many different textures can be made from one brush tip; shape Angle Jitter is great for making a brush look more random.

down Shift to keep the selection square) Choose Edit>Define Brush Preset. You can either give the brush a name now, or do that later when you're happy with it. Click OK.

change the spacing, because this has such a dramatic effect on the stroke. Now that you show to select brushes from the brush presets if you want the correct settings. Selecting brushes from the Brush Tip Shape menu only switches the tip

6 Brush tip shape

The next stage is to play with all Photoshop's brush settings until you have a brush that you want to keep. The new brush, created by Define Brush Preset will be at the bottom of the brushes palette, but it's unlikely that it will make the exact mark you were aiming for. You can tweak them by going to the options at the base of the palette when Brush Tip Shape is selected. The first thing I do is

7 New brush presets

Once you've made changes to a new brush, it needs to be saved again or the changes will be lost when you select another brush preset. Save the new brush by selecting New Brush Preset in the Brushes palette menu. This is usually when I name a brush, because I've had a chance to use it and see what kind of mark it makes on the canvas

10 A helping hand with texture

Textures can be created by texturing existing brush tips combined with some fiddling with the various options in the Brushes palette, but the Texture palette can make even the hard round brush look interesting. There are controls for the scale, mode and depth of the texture but the most interesting area of this palette is the Texture Picker ➤

Click on the small triangle next to the texture thumbnail for more textures and a further menu for opening other texture libraries. Its great fun trying out different textures with various brushes and you can create brushes to add to the libraries.

11 Dual brush

The Dual Brush option enables you to combine two different brushes with further controls for diameter spacing, scatter and count. You can create all sorts of texture effects and unusual marks - however there is a drawback - it can slow your brush strokes down because Photoshop has to think about both brushes.

12 Other options

The bottom half of the list in the Brushes palette provides a few more controls. Wet Edge creates an interesting watercolour effect, especially when it blurs with some of the other features mentioned. Smoothing is an

important option. If this box isn't ticked curved lines that you've drawn quickly can appear as angled lines rather than smooth curves. When I first installed Photoshop I spent one afternoon convinced that something was drastically wrong with my Wacom tablet, because smoothing was unchecked!

13 Trial and error

Experimentation is the best way to discover the huge capabilities of the Brushes palette. If you can't find a brush you want in the default brushes, create new shapes and save them to create new brushes - or try adapting existing types in the Photoshop libraries. I'm always finding incredibly useful new brushes.

14 Saving a brush library

I have lots of brush libraries for drawing or painting. I download some from other artists' websites. Once you've created a few brushes, make sure you save them as a brush library. Choose Save

Brushes from the Brushes palette, which should take you to the Presets folder where you can save them.

15 Finishing touches

I've barely mentioned the progress on the troll illustration. The tips and techniques described here should be evident in the image. Some of the new brushes I've created have been useful and some will be deleted but most importantly, whenever I need a particular brush, Photoshop's Brushes palette enables me to modify an existing brush to suit my needs or create a new one.

Painter

PAINT AIR BATTLE CINESCAPES

Ever fancied creating dramatic cinematic scenes like this air fight? **Ryan Church** takes the pilot seat...

efore beginning a concept sketch or painting for a movie, I usually work with the director and review the script for the particular scene. In the case of this tutorial, the scene is an air battle. To create this illustration two-dimensionally I begin by examining real aircraft in order to understand their construction, the main features required for flying, their markings, materials and reflective properties. All this research will help me to create

fictional aircraft based on something known and understood.

In this scene, I decide to paint air combat ships fighting across a night sky. In the final composition, the eye will move from left to right with a large ship in the foreground contrasting against the light of the background and the rocket exhausts. It will become evident as your eye moves across the frame that a large ship is closing in on a smaller ship, which is itself chasing three other planes further ahead.

I decide to use smoke and condensation trails (contrails), as well as the light from the rocket ship in the foreground, to move the eye quickly from left to right as the scene unfolds. It is important in such a composition to have a foreground, a middle ground and a background. In this particular scene, the middle ground depicts large airships in strong one-point perspective. They are placed along the perspective line to draw the eye in and across, and create a sense of depth and space. The background

draws you in, so you then see another large airship and some carefully arranged ground details. This is my favourite type of painting – one that faithfully depicts in detail the aircraft's design, but also illustrates the illusion of speed across a motionless frame.

1 Set up the workspace

To save on screen real estate, I set up my workspace with a custom palette so that my tools are easily accessible, while those I won't need, or use rarely, are not in my way. To create a custom palette, just drag a brush variant out of the Brush

▼ Air Combat Palette

Selector bar and onto the workspace. I customise my own brush variants, using the Brush Creator and the new Brush Control palettes (Windows>Brush Controls) in conjunction with the custom palette. Using both of these features enables me to streamline my workflow and meet my deadlines.

For my custom palette, I choose: Digital Airbrush, Square Chalk, Broad Water Brush (from Digital Watercolour), Glow (from F-X), Eraser, Grainy Water (from Blenders) Wet Eraser (from Digital Watercolour), Water Rake (from Blenders), Fine Camel 10 (from Oils) and Croquil Pen 3. I set my work up in Full Screen mode (Command/Ctrl+M).

2 Make a line drawing

Once I have an idea of what the director envisages and how that scene is to play out, I begin a line drawing. This loose black and white drawing will be extremely useful. It will be shared with the photographers and set directors to provide them with a visual of the scene, as well as the overall feeling, action and mood that the director is attempting to evoke. A line drawing can be a traditional sketch scanned in and imported or a line drawing sketched in Painter IX using its Natural Media tools and features. Painter IX offers many sketching tools to choose from, along with a large variety of paper textures and colours, such as Artists' Colours, the new default colour set.

I experiment with a few rough sketches first, to get a feel of the scene and the objects. I can restart quickly and easily but in this case I like one of my initial sketches so I continue to build it up. I begin my line drawing in Painter. I use a brush or a pen that can switch from a thick to a thin calligraphy line. This gives the same effect as that produced by a quill pen or sketchbook. You can find an assortment of pens and

brushes in the Brush Selector bar. It's important at this time to establish perspective lines. These will help place my subject matter into the composition. With this image, the aircraft will be flying through the air quickly, dodging and fighting. The horizon line reflects the angle at which you wish an aircraft to be flying into the scene. It also helps to provide depth of field and the illusion of movement.

3 Rotate the page

I rotate my canvas by using the Rotate Page tool in the toolbox (located in the Grabber flyout) and apply a few light lines across the page where I want my horizon line to be. I skew this horizon line to create a more dynamic space. In this composition, the horizon will curve from the lower left to the upper right. I use the Fine Camel 10 brush (Oils brush category) to fill in light lines in varying base colours of blues and greys. It may take a few tries before you get the lines you want where you want them.

Once I have my look, I create a new layer and go over my sketch with a tight line drawing. This helps me nail down the design more accurately. I check my perspective, tighten up the design and create the template on which my painting will be based.

4 Block in the scene

Next I block in my image, 'painting with the lights turned off.' I apply a tonal value to the canvas. With Painter, I can alter my canvas colour or tone by applying a colour overlay. To do this, I select a colour from my Colour palette, and go to Effects>Surface Controls>Colour Overlay. I choose Uniform Colour from the Using list and leave the default Model at Dye Concentration. Using a mid-toned ground further increases the tonal range of the medium. Whites provide lights and highlights, while blues, browns, and **>>**

blacks provide the mid-to-dark and dark tones. The use of toned paper or canvas is a popular technique used predominantly from the 16th to the 19th century in Europe, so seems appropriate.

Because this aircraft battle scene takes place across the evening sky, I want to evoke a certain mood and depth, so I choose a blue-grey tone for the colour overlay. This functions positively as an overall tone for the sky and as a mid-tone for the aircraft. I adjust the opacity to a lower setting so the lines of my drawing become visible through the colour.

On a new layer, I begin blocking in colour and tone with translucent media such as the Detail airbrush, found in the Airbrushes category. This enables me to preserve my line drawing for as long as possible. For this, I select a colour to act as the base for my aircraft, in blue-grey. Using long calligraphy strokes, I fill in the main objects in my composition. I can then go back in easily with the Eraser to clean up some of the lines. When I have the illustration completely blocked in using translucent media, I begin rendering with opaque media, such as Square Chalk, found in the Chalk brush category. By decreasing the Grain on this brush variant (in the General controls of the Brush Creator) I reduce the amount of paper texture showing through.

Work up the air ships

I begin working on the aircraft by dropping my previous layer and opening a new one. Given the dramatic and dark nature of this scene, I choose to build up my aircraft using mainly monochromatic colours. I then have to decide on the time of day and establish where my light and shadow will fall. Using an airbrush from the Airbrushes category, I create monochromatic gradations from light to dark on the vehicles and the sky, illustrating the highlights and shadows. This begins to give shape and dimension to the painting. I start to establish forms in the background, such as a faded cityscape and other smaller vehicles.

Airbrushing

Once I've built these objects up, I open a new layer, choose the colours for each of the vehicles and apply them using the Wash brush. I just want a soft hint of colour, so I use the airbrush to block in large simple values. I begin with the smaller planes and establish their forms using long flowing lines, following the shape of the object. Since this is on a new layer, I can go out of the lines and still go back in and erase without affecting my background.

I complete the basic form, then save and bring up a new layer to begin working on the larger plane that's in the foreground. I find the Glow brush useful for this, because it creates a reflective quality along the top of areas facing the sun and the rocket exhaust. I apply long smooth strokes of graded colours in reds and yellows to create the fiery effect for the rockets.

A dramatic sky

I start work on the background by copying the canvas onto itself. I click Select>All, then Edit>Copy, then Edit>Paste in place. I lower the opacity by moving the Opacity slider on the Layers palette. This enables me to work in smooth uninterrupted strokes. I go back in with my Eraser over the aircraft without removing my work below. On a new layer, I use the Glow brush to create a gradation of warmer colours in the lighter areas, such as oranges, reds and yellows, and cooler colours in the shaded areas, such as greys and blues.

For clouds, I use the Square Chalk brush with a basic colour palette consisting of whites, greys and blues. I add some warmer tones, such as reds and yellows, to clouds closer to the light source of the rocket to give the impression of reflected light. I block in shapes using quick motions. Using this technique, along with Painter's ability to

resize the brush directly on the canvas (hold Command+Option or Ctrl+Alt and drag the pen on the canvas), I create contrails. They gradually get smaller, from the planes across the sky, implying movement and speed. I continue creating patterns in the sky, applying light and shade to the clouds, depending on where the light sources hit them.

I need a Blender, such as Blur or Diffuse Blur, to smudge the chalk lines and create a more dramatic cloud effect with more shadow and pattern. Using the blending brushes I can push and pull existing colour on the canvas in the same way I would work with traditional oil paints. This creates the realistic painterly effect that clouds have as they fade into the atmosphere.

Once I have established a basic background that I'm happy with, I use the Detail airbrush to create atmosphere and give shape to the composition. I apply light fluid motions to the edges of the canvas to provide depth to the lit and shaded areas. Because of the dramatic light source on the left, I decide to add darker gradations on the right and move to lighter colours the closer I get to the light. This helps to push the clouds into the background.

I pause and step back from the painting. Zooming in and out by using shortcut keys (Command/Ctrl +, to zoom in, and Command/Ctrl - to zoom out) I can ensure I am not overdoing any one particular area and provide a sense of how the scene is coming along. I also flip the canvas (Canvas>Rotate Canvas>Flip Canvas Horizontal), to get a mirror image of my painting. These two techniques enable me to check my composition and perspective and gain some objectivity.

Add more details

When I have built up the overall composition, I drop the layer, open a new one and get to work on the details. This is what I refer to as 'turning the lights on.' I am careful not to overdo any one
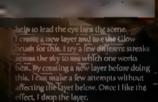
area, because the objects in the background are more out of focus than those in the foreground. I also look for where there might be reflections in the glass and add details to the wings, weapons and hull area. I collapse the layers and bring up a new layer whenever I move on to something new, such as placing in accent colours. Once I have a good base of colour and details, I use an airbrush to add more shadows, and the Eraser to remove paint, to bring back the layer below. Building up shadows and highlights brings the aircraft to life.

I add in some darker colours around the areas that I'd expect to get a lot of smoke exhaust. This is not a new vehicle; it needs to look dirty and worn in places, with oil and dust built up over years of flying. There needs to be some oil and dirt around any gun barrel or jet flames, too. The Square Chalk brush is useful for creating this effect, along with an airbrush with a dark blue-black colour.

I continue to build up details, collapsing my previous layer and then opening a new layer with each stage. I use a Fine brush to paint the details of the panel lines and paint in some small windows. The panels become smaller at the front of the plane as it is further into the painting. This is where my original perspective lines prove useful. I step back from my image before deciding to tighten any areas that seem messy or need a bit more work.

My final touches are the contrails from the smaller planes flying into the middle ground. They help give perspective to the

help to lead the eye into the scene. I create a new layer and use the Glow brush for this. I try a few different streaks across the sky to see which one works best. By creating a new layer before doing this, I can make a few attempts without affecting the layer below. Once I like the effect, I drop the layer.

I check to see if I need to go back in and warm up some of the clouds and work them up a bit more in order to balance the finished image. Adding more contrast gives the scene a more cinematic effect. When I feel like I have achieved a balanced dramatic effect, I step away from my finished piece.

Painter & Photoshop

HOW TO PAINT A REALISTIC FACE

Marta Dahlig shows you the essentials of face painting, from a basic sketch to final colouring

I want to learn a few basic steps if you want to paint a realistic face. Once you've grasped these you should find your images take on a new quality. I'll take you through the creation of this image called Cherry Blossom, and explain some essentials, such as choosing, mixing and applying colours, and using highlights and shadows.

I'll describe the differences between particular brushes, their specific advantages in creating textures and the importance of choosing appropriate tones to convey element in your artwork.

To understand the instructions and use the tutorial to its fullest, you should have a basic knowledge of Painter, Photoshop or another painting program, own a tablet and have a general idea of human anatomy.

I have created the tutorial image using Painter with the Fintagh brush set imported from Painter 6. However, it's possible to achieve the same effects in any version of Photoshop or Painter, so I have included some tips on painting in those programs.

Remember that there are many ways to achieve certain effects, so you are not tied to follow my steps, as strictly there is no one right way to paint. Be creative and feel free to experiment as much as you want. This tutorial is meant as a guideline for you to find your own way of painting.

1 Ideas stage

The key to successful painting can rest on having a good idea to start with, so try to spend at least a few minutes on designing and polishing the concept. Think of the character, suitable colours and atmosphere.

Once you have a clear image of what you want, create a new file. It's best to work to a size that's at least twice that which your picture will be seen in. If your computer is capable, try to paint in print quality resolutions, of 200-300 DPI or more. Choose a background colour that's not too saturated. Create a layer and sketch the basic look of your character by marking the position and shape of the eyes, nose and lips. It doesn't really matter what tool you use, so choose the one you feel most comfortable with. We need these lines for a few steps only.

2 Contours

This step is recommended if you don't feel confident about defining light sources and shading. A human face isn't flat, so using these markings will help you understand its structure. Create two new layers on top of the sketch. On the first one, mark the convex areas of the face (red lines). These include eyebrows, cheeks, nose tip, lips and chin. On the second layer, define highlights according to the chosen light source.

Shading is easiest when you place the light source somewhere in front of your character. In this setting the most convex areas are also the most highlighted. Sketch rays of light (arrows) and mark the lightest areas (irregular white shapes) accordingly. If there is light, there must be

shadow, so make the convex areas cast a shadow (dark lines) on the face.

3 Colour blocking

On a new layer, block out some colours to use throughout the painting process. Go with the basic round brush from Tinting or a smeary round brush in Tools>Palette Knives (Painter) or choose a hard round brush with varying opacity (Photoshop). Create a new layer under the initial sketch and use your new palette to block out the main skin colour mid-tone. If you are a beginner, choose a typical flesh colour.

Now apply basic shadows of a tone slightly different to your mid-tone. Use your light source sketch to help you. Don't pay too much attention to the highlights yet. Avoid smudgy brushes in Painter or soft round brushes in Photoshop. Also, avoid shading with a darker version of your mid-tone. The human face is made of many colours, so change both the hue and the brightness of your colour. Make it more red, for example. It makes a dramatic difference.

4 Shadows

Deepen the shadows, especially around the eyes. For dramatic effects, make a strong contrast between the lightest and darkest areas.

5 Colour blending

Turn off the Sketch layer, using the Eye icon in the Layers palette (Photoshop or Painter). Don't delete this or the convex and lighting lines though – you never know when you might need them. It's time to start blending all those rough colours. First, soften the rough borders between light and dark areas by applying colours with a low opacity brush on top of the edges. Painter fans can mix colours smoothly with the fantastic Blender brush (Tinting). It saves a lot of trouble and adds texture. Photoshoppers can use a low (15-30 per cent) opacity hard round brush. Avoid the Smear/Smudge tools because they will take away the texture.

6 Features

Continue blending and start marking subtle highlights. A light turquoise applied with a low opacity brush is fantastic for this. The transition between colours should become smoother. Start defining the facial features. Perfect the mouth shape and remember that the upper lip is less convex (darker). Define the eye shapes by marking the upper and lower eyelids. Keep your brushstrokes smooth and tidy. Avoid highlighting skin with pure white because this looks waxy. Try not to define the eyes with dark lines or they will look cartoonish. ➤➤

PRO SECRETS

7 Tones

An much Latten ion to the colours. If you feel that the face is missing a spark add it. Experiment with tones – try adding and blending reds, blues or greens to enrich the colour palette. When you feel you have achieved the skin tone you desire move on to the next step

8 Texture

Your work should now start looking more realistic. In Painter, choose the Blender brush. Alternatively, in Photoshop, pick a speckled brush – these are made of dozens of dots – when they're applied with patience on a low opacity, they blend perfectly and give a fantastic texture. If you haven't defined the hairstyle for your face, sketch it out now. Do it on a separate layer so you can easily change it later

9 Airbrushing

Now the transition between colours should be getting quite smooth. After creating enough texture, you can use some non-texture brushes such as an airbrush in Painter or a soft round one in Photoshop. Apply some low opacity strokes to soften the rough areas of the face, but be careful because you can easily make the skin look artificial. You can also add a small round highlight to the iris to give your character some life

PRO SECRETS

10 Eye Shape

Now let's concentrate on the eyes. An eye is a ball, so both ends of it will be a bit darker than the centre. Dim the corners, especially the outer ones. Sketch out around form a mouth. Remember to mark the pupil. Irises are made of dozens of tiny lines spread between their edges and the pupil. Draw them with a small opaque (85 to percent) airbrush. Feel free to make some lines darker, lighter or thicker for an interesting effect. Add a small highlight on the upper half – consider the fact that it's also a round

11 Eye tones

Now it's time to give the iris further detail – darken it at the edges, add some dots, sparks and hints of other colours. Irises usually consist of a few tones. Then work on the eyelids, defining their shape and adding highlights, especially in the middle section. Remember to mark the pink flesh of the eye

12 Lashes

Create a new layer and add some eyelashes using the Airbrush tool. Paint them a bit too long, so you can later soften their edges with a soft eraser. For realistic painting it is crucial to remember the lines details. Add a small highlight just outside the inner corner of each eye

13 Smoothing

Make the tip of the nose more round by taking an rbrush and applying some shadow on the bottom of it. Highlight it with turquoise at the centre. Smooth the whole nose with Blender and add a subtle highlight it

The lips still need a lot of work. To shade them use a basic round brush and Blender (Painter) or a hard round brush (Photoshop). Apply shadows to both edges of the lips and give a darker hint at the centre of the lower lip. Add two highlights on both sides of this shadow. Make the centre of the upper lip slightly lighter than the sides

14 Attitude

If you want your lips to have more attitude, darken them. To do so, create a layer on top of the lips, run with a pink and brown over the lips and set the layer's mode to Multiply. If you are satisfied with the mid-tone it's time to add some texture. With a basic round brush (Painter) or a hard round brush (Photoshop) add some light blocks of colour on the lips. Their size and brightness should vary

15 Highlights

With the same brushes selected add some lighter blocks on top of the previous ones. This time, make them significantly smaller. Add some highlight to the edge of the upper lip too. You can also lighten up the sides of the lower lip, to give the mouth a natural, fresh look.

16 Moisture

To finish the lips, select a small sized airbrush, choose a light colour from the pink palette and set the opacity to 50 per cent. Use it over the lips, making a series of small dots. Now enlarge the tip of your airbrush and add some subtle highlights to the lower lip, mostly to the top of areas you have highlighted in the previous step. Now change the colour to turquoise and lighten the edge of the upper lip for a wet look.

17 Hair layer

It's time to work on the hair. Remember how important it was to sketch it on a separate layer? Change the layer's opacity to around 50 per cent, so it is still visible but not disturbing. Create a new layer on top. In Painter, choose an airbrush or a fine point from Inks, or in Photoshop pick a soft round brush or a low opacity hard round one and set the brush to the chosen colour. Beginners should beware of using black hair because it's hard to texture and to advance highlights or shadows.

First, sketch the basic shape of your hair. Try to plan the main wisps carefully and precisely – once you start shading it is hard to fix mistakes. After outlining the flow, pick a colour for the basis of your future highlights. Don't choose anything too vivid yet. The shade should be just a bit lighter than the main hair colour. Apply some thick, half transparent strands with a big brush paying more attention to the areas most exposed to the light.

18 Strands

The secret to painting hair is making it seem detailed, while not painting every single strand. You have to give detail to the visible areas and let others fade into darkness. Painting every bit will make the hair look artificial. Start by adding details and texture. Begin applying darker and thicker strands. Move slowly to lighter and thinner ones. Mark the lightest wisps in the most highlighted places only, or else the hair will look flat.

If your scene needs more depth, choose a shade darker than the basic hair colour and dim some areas. Blend separate strands with a basic round brush (Painter) or low opacity hard round brush (Photoshop). To create flowing hair with a sense of depth, add some half transparent strands underneath the existing hair.

19 Detail

To finish the hair, paint the background you want. In Photoshop, you can change the skin or hair colour to make everything fit, with the Colour Balance tool. Thanks to this, little wonder you can easily adjust some colours without doing any harm to the existing palette (unlike hue changing).

20 Final touches

For your image to be successful, the character and background must complement each other. Achieve this by adding an element of the background directly to the foreground. Here, I use some transparent petals and a flower in the woman's hair. Once you have created a full scene, consider yourself done. Take one last critical look at the piece and backup the file on your hard drive. ●

Photoshop

INKING
FOR COMICS

Frazer Irving guides you through the art of illustration for comics, in part 3 of...
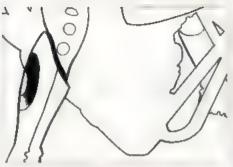
1 A messy business

At the start of inking, it's important to know how to hold the brush. I find that holding the brush so that the point dips down almost vertically works best as it gives the most freedom of movement and thus the most versatile strokes though it can as a result cramp your work.

Other factors that come into play when inking with a brush are avoiding dipping your hand into puddles of wet ink, setting up straight, inking on a flat surface at 45 degrees and washing your brush after every hour. There are proper books on the art of inking and if you are new to the idea then you may wish to explore further, but for now I'm going to assume you have a basic working knowledge of the craft.

2 Holding lines

When inking over a blueline printout (as explained in last issue's tutorial) the trick is to clarify the lines and add weight to them in order to denote shape, form and light. In this case I use what we call 'holding lines' which are simply outlines that are complete. This enables the colour to be 'held' within them. This is generally used to assist with the colouring process (as you will see in next issue's tutorial). Holding lines should vary in weight as otherwise they can flatten the image, creating an unusual lack of depth.

3 Weight

Line weight is a key factor in inking, as it is used to show light and to create character. Here, I ink in outline of the bike shape with a mechanical pen because it is an inorganic object and reflects less personality than the flesh or jacket of the girl. Using a ruler, I make straight lines. As the bike is to be filled with colour later on, I keep the weight constant. On the figure I use slight variations in weight by increasing the pressure on the brush, making heavier lines on the side of the body which is furthest from the light, or where the form needs to be accentuated.

4 Inking out

Using the tip of the brush I create marks that resemble short sharp points. This is a method used to suggest a rounded form without being cluttered, as the lines taper into areas of solid shadow. The marks also suggest texture so I don't use it on areas that are meant to be smooth, though smaller marks are used on the flesh as it does reflect a small amount of texture. Create these marks by placing the brush tip on the paper and carefully inking from thin to thick, what we call inking out. Other short tapered lines are used on the hand to show a slight grey tone, although I try to be sparing with these lines because too much use can make the art look busy and lacking in contrast.

5 Scanning

I scan the art on my A3 scanner. I scan in b/w mode as a bitmap at 600 DPI. I use the preset contrast settings because they seem fine. Try experimenting to find out what settings best suit you.

6 Resolution

Once the art is scanned, I open my master document in Photoshop with the original pencils showing. I then set a new document the size of the image, set to and I then work from a scanned line art and copy and paste it into the new document in master document in Quick Mask mode.

7 Colour preparation

Once pasted in, I line up the Quick Mask layer with the original drawing, go back to Standard mode and select Invert Selection. I fill the selection with 100 per cent black and lock the layer. Now the line art is ready for colouring!

66 Much of the figure is in shadow, so a lot of the detail from the sketch gets lost 99

Artist theory
LOST EDGES

Mattias Snygg

This piece started out as homage to [...] creation, [...] Bauer and his unique take on [...]

[...] and horns syndrome that is so prevalent today in commercial illustration. With Hienrik, Bauer was more interested in expression and soul than [...] heavyweight spiky [...] and oversized [...] weapons. And that is why they remain much powerful and moving images, even [...] 500 years later. [...] wanted to stay faithful [...] nal design, while [...]

[...] ng; these are two very different [...] and should be approached [...]

lot of detail from the original sketch gets lost in this process.

An effective way to make a painting easy to read is to find ways to connect the shadow volumes. Look at the left leg on the troll and how its shape merges with the cave opening in the background. We can still make out the leg even though the only things [...] the tip of the shoe and [...]

[...] the blanks, so it doesn't take much [...] sense of seemingly [...]

[...] The better part of the face in this piece is hidden in shadow. Once again the [...] with the background without the slightest hint of outline. The [...] ofile is completely lost, but we still feel a [...]

[...] through own [...]

People often express discomfort at the prospect of simplifying a painting [...]

[...] ow areas and consciously directing the viewer's attention with the use of lost edges.

45

THE PROFILE

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Adam is a
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Bryce & Photoshop
CITY OF THE FUTURE

Use Bryce and Photoshop to create a vast futuristic cityscape
using custom terrain objects. By **Adam Benton**

E ver since Fritz Lang's
Metropolis hit the silver
screen back in 1927,
countless artistic minds have
been keen to create their own visions
of huge futuristic cities, where mankind
(or otherwise) might live and work one
day. One of my favourites, a detailed
contemporary example, is George Lucas'
vision of Coruscant, a planet entirely
covered in city structure.

Obviously, creating detail of that scale
and versatility in a 3D app is a time,

... if we try to be too literal.
However, it is possible to suggest
something of that scale and grandeur,
which is quite common in sci-fi art. In this tutorial, I demonstrate
a method I devised previously for a sci-fi
comic book novel, using this kind of
generic terrain and formation.

You can share using an image editor
such as Photoshop and then... the
... final composite...
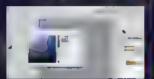
more experience. Bryce, as it still a
powerful tool to the sci-fi artist and
fantasy artist who wants to realise a
landscape relatively quickly. It provides
constant versatility with its intuitive sun
and atmosphere controls and presets.

... all the files you need to
follow workshop on the ImagineFX
DVD. These include the final Bryce
file, along with my pre-made source
images. You'll also find a layered
Photoshop document to show you how I
... the spacecraft to the scene. Enjoy!

1 Canvas

The first few steps involve an image editor such as Photoshop. The actual city objects are created with Bryce terrains. The greyscale source images are made in the image editor. First, I open Photoshop and create a new document, making it 1,024x1,024 pixels, in Greyscale format. Next, I select the Paint Bucket tool and fill the canvas with 50 per cent black. This gives a mid-grey colour as the base tone.

2 Colour blocks

I use the Rectangular Marquee tool to make random square and rectangular selections (hold down Shift to add to the existing selections). I make sure they're spread fairly evenly across the entire canvas. [...] quarter of it, I click on Foreground Colour in the [...] bar and make it 75 per cent black. I create a new layer and use the Paint Bucket tool to fill the rectangular selections. I duplicate this layer and rotate it 90°. From the Select menu, I choose Load Selections, delete the current selection and fill with 25 per cent black.

The shortcuts
Switch to hand icon
In Photoshop, hold down the space bar while clicking and dragging, to change your current tool to a hand icon to freely move around a large image

3 Layers

I merge these two layers together and duplicate the resulting layer. I resize this to about the document size, then change the brightness and contrast of this layer, as shown. I now duplicate this layer three more times, rotating and repositioning each one to fill the other canvas corners. Now hopefully we can see where this is going. It depends on your own taste and requirements as to whether you continue with this merging, duplication and contrast tweaking, according to how much detail you want in your city. You might also decide to add some circular shapes or change the overall levels.

4 Streets

I make more adjustments to the different levels and add some solid black areas, to appear like deep chasm-like streets. I create a large circular area to add more interest to the main area of my city and I make a number of variations so that when all of them are arranged, the structures look more variable – random, yet planned. When you are happy with these city maps, save them as [...] high-quality JPG files.

5 Terrains

In Bryce's Create menu, I choose a terrain object and select the little [E] next to the terrain object to open the Editor. First, I change the resolution of the terrain up to 1,024 to give more definition. To choose the first image, I go to Editing-Photo-Picture-Load and browse to my first city map. I copy and paste the first image into the second box. I click Apply and click the tick button to leave the editor. Back in the view port, I click Render. As you can see, there is already an interesting-looking structure.

6 Duplication

I don't resize the terrains, so I can duplicate this terrain using either the menu Copy and Paste commands or the keyboard shortcut Apple+C/Apple+V (Mac) or Ctrl+C / Ctrl+V (PC). I press Shift and the Up arrow eight times, to move the second terrain object to the exact edge of the first in the +Z direction.

7 More maps

To load another city map into the first picture box, I open the Editor for this new terrain and repeat the method in Step 5 and so on. Back in the view port, I do another render. By now, you can see how the city is going to shape up. You continue to duplicate the terrains, changing and viewing their city map images as I go and then 'tile' them across [...]

8 Resolution

As I want the same level of detail throughout my picture, my circular city map is made of 4x1,024 pixel maps in Photoshop, giving me a 2,048x2,048 image map. To retain this detail in the terrain object, I need to increase its resolution, I duplicate a terrain and enter the Editor again, click on the resolution dropdown and change its value to 2,048. Now I import the larger, circular map and apply it as before.

9 Large scale

Back in the view port, I need to enlarge the terrain object. I click on [M] next to the object and change the X and Z dimensions from 81,92 to 162.84. I use the Shift and arrow keys again to move the terrain to the edge of the others and do another render. It's really beginning to take on the look of a grand cityscape now.

10 Objects

I don't want more detail and polygons than are necessary because this will slow the scene down and take longer to render, so I decide roughly what my viewpoint will be, then add just enough terrains to fill my view. I go back through the distant ones and, in the Editor, reduce their resolution. One in the foreground will be great at 2,048 or 1,024, in the mid-background 512 would be ok, with a setting as low as 256 in the more distant areas.

You might also want to change the camera's field of view to get more of a wide angle effect. I always use the Director camera by default, since I prefer the level of control it offers to rotate around active objects. I double click on the camera navigation ball and change the POV settings up to 40°. I also like to add some 'banking' to the camera in aerial shots, as it really adds a more dynamic edge to the composition – you can either change this in the same dialogue via the Rotate Z field, or back in the view port via the little button to the left of the camera navigation ball.

11 Landscape

Right, it's time for some landscape terrains. I foresee this as a coastal city, I want to create a peninsula of land curving off from the city into the distance. I create a new terrain object and enter the Editor. There is no point in me trying to explain every step, since it's all done by 'feel' as you go along. I suggest you start with a fractal terrain – click on the little dropdown menu just under it and see what each one looks like. Move the 3D Preview around to get a feel for the terrain. Then it's a matter of subtly applying small amounts of erosion (click on, hold and drag left/right). I used some Erosion, Mounds, Subplateau, Subcontinent and Gaussian Edges to taper the terrains down to the sea.

12 Positioning

When you are happy with your terrain, go back to the main view port and use the Move tools in the Edit palette to push the terrain back beyond the city edge. You'll need to scale it all up as well, then probably scale down the Y height to make it more of a range than one large mountain. Now, click on the little [M] next to the terrain and choose a material. I have chosen

Whole Mountain in my example because it often green and sandy patches as well as visible coastal sand and rock edges.

13 Textures

I select the ground Plane via the Selection palette at the bottom of the screen and apply a water texture to it. I opt for something with no transparency and a subtle amount of bump, then use the transformation tools to increase the frequency of the bump (make it finer – see ...). ... water would make it almost smooth from this distance.

Before I go any further with additional ground terrains, it's wise to group the city blocks, so they can be textured as one. Again from the selection palette, I click on the Terrain icon and choose select all of type' from the list. Now I enter the list again and while holding down Shift I click on the last terrain added. This should now exclude it from the selection (grey in the view port). With all the city terrains selected, I click [G] to group them.

Now I can enter the Material Editor as before and apply a single texture to the whole group. In this case I've used a bitmap image, which I made in a similar way to the terrain maps themselves – multiple layers of rectangles at different tones of grey. I change the mapping method to Object Cubic.

17 Render time
Render the scene at your chosen size and resolution. Enable anti-aliasing for a smoother finish. Export the image as a Photoshop or TIFF file. For flexibility in the next step, select your ships, click the Render Options down arrow to the right of the render buttons, select Object Mask and render again. This creates an alpha mask for isolating vehicles from the backdrop in Photoshop.

14 Atmosphere
Now it's time to bring the environment to life. The first thing to do is create some atmosphere. I click on the down arrow to open the Sky & Fog presets. I have chosen a simple daytime sky – Monday Sky. This looks okay, but the scale and depth of the scene would really benefit from some careful fog and haze tweaks.
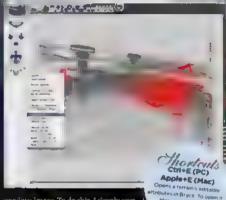
I click the Down arrow at the right end of the Sky & Fog palette and open the Sky Lab. In the atmosphere area, you can experiment with the haze and fog to familiarise yourself with what they both add. Haze really helps in creating the distance in the landscape, while fog can add a natural, low-level mist layer to help.

scene. I have kept my fog layer quite subtle, below the level of the buildings. I think these two effects are what really bring credibility to a Bryce landscape.

If you haven't already done so, extend the coastline into the distance to really take advantage of the haze depth. Simply select your first Terrain, copy and paste a new one and move this further back into the scene. Rotate it around the Y-axis and change the scale as required. I have created the entire landscape this way.

15 Adding features
Do a full screen render and tweak the atmospheric and sky elements as desired. At this stage I add a couple of

previous image. To do this, I simply save my scene, open the other document, copy the object I want to add, load my city landscape document again and paste in the object.

Now we have a fine sci-fi city backdrop, but we need a foreground element. Whether you want a dragon, a spaceship or a balloon, you'll probably need to import it from another modelling application, or something such as Poser/Daz Studio. In this case, I am going to use a spaceship model that I have been working on in Cinema 4D. Although it's not quite finished yet (it's missing engines and so on) it will work well from this viewpoint.

16 Importing files
Bryce can import a number of file formats, but most typically the models you can download on various websites will be in the 3ds or obj format, both of which work well in this application. The obj format is the format I mostly use to export my own models. Find or create a suitable model then in Bryce go to File>Import Object. Navigate to your file and open it. Now it's just a matter of scaling and positioning your craft using the Edit tools. If the model is a download from the web, it may already have textures applied and mapped, in which case you might only need to tweak the diffuse, bump and specularity. If not create another texture map (simulating the buildings one) and maybe add some appropriate mapping. You can easily get away with quite a lot if the texture is random and simple.

Shortcuts
Ctrl+E (PC)
Apple+E (Mac)
Opens a terrain's editable attributes in Bryce. To open in Materials Editor use
Ctrl+M (PC),
Apple+M (Mac)

PRO SECRETS
Effects tips using masks
Object, Distance and Altitude masks are useful because they enable you to add more localised effects and techniques, post render. Object is used to isolate items, giving more control in layers (blurring the foreground/background objects independently to emphasise focus. Altitude and Distance enable you to play with depth-of-field blurring and they help with lighting and haze

18 Alpha masks
In Photoshop, open both image files. Click on the Channels tab, to reveal the four channels that your image is composed from. Click the arrow to the right of the tabs and select New Channel. Click OK in the dialogue that opens. Copy and paste your alpha mask into this new channel layer. Hold down Command and click on the alpha layer icon to select the white mask area. Click back onto the Layers tab and with your image's background layer selected, copy and paste. Your ships should be duplicated on their own layer. Now you can tweak colour levels and add in distance blurs, photographic clouds, heat haze, engine exhaust and lights – to be explored in a coming issue.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX
Reviews

The latest digital art software, hardware, books, training and film releases…

18 PRODUCTS ON TEST

SOFTWARE

102 Manga Studio EX 3
The first Mac-friendly software tailored to manga creation

104 Expression
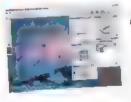Microsoft's vector and pixel-packed beta

104 Eye Candy 5
Nature effects plug-in for Photoshop from Alien Skin

105 Sketch Master
A quick, handy tool for turning photos into digital sketches

105 Painter Essentials 3
Painter's power and tools but for a lower budget

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106 Aurora 5500 R1
What can Aserware's storming new PC do for digital artists?

106 Nisis Easypen G6
An entry level, low cost graphics tablet for PC artists

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108 Mythology
DC Comics' fabled crusaders, plus cutting-edge traditional and voyeur sic releases

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109 Painter IX tour
Learn to use this essential tool with the man who created it

FILMS

110 Animation greats
Corpse Bride, Ghost in the Shell 2: Serenity, Grave of the fireflies

Joanna Zhou trials Manga Studio LX 3 on page 102

> 66 There are more capes, boots and leotards than anyone could ever dream of 99

RATINGS EXPLAINED ✎✎✎✎✎ Magnificent ✎✎✎✎ Good ✎✎✎ Ordinary ✎✎ Poor ✎ Atrocious

This image was created with Manga Studio EX and Painter X. Special tools of Manga Studio make it magically easy to shade or etch screentone!

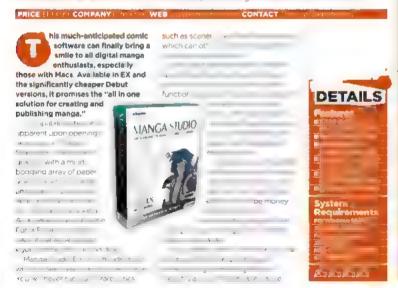The return manga software comes in two choices, Debut for enthusiasts and EX for professional artists with own high-performance hardware.

Manga Studio EX 3.0

LONG-AWAITED RELEASE The first Mac-compatible software with essential tools and tones to create digital manga comics from scratch

PRICE	COMPANY	WEB	CONTACT

This much-anticipated comic software can finally bring a smile to all digital manga enthusiasts, especially those with Macs. Available in EX and the significantly cheaper Debut versions, it promises the "all in one solution for creating and publishing manga."

...apparent upon opening...

...with a mind-boggling array of paper...

...be money

such as scenery which can of...

function...

DETAILS

Features

System
Requirements

JOANNA ZHOU

We asked professional manga artist Joanna Zhou what she thinks of Manga Studio.

What do you like the most about Manga Studio?
The huge selection of screentone. I have an obsession with scenery and background tones because they're impossible to create from scratch. I've spent hundreds of pounds buying real scenery tones, so Manga Studio will save me a lot of money.

And your five favourite features?
Screentone variety, the Panel Rules function, the Brush tool for painting with tone or imagery. Page and Speech Bubble templates and the Vector option which prevents moiré during resizing.

Had you heard about the software before this release?
Yes, about a year ago. There was quite a buzz on the Sweatdrop forums where people discuss the programs available for creating manga

Will any other software do?
Perhaps 70 per cent of a basic manga page is achievable using other programs but it takes longer without these specialist tools and shortcuts

Why would you use Manga Studio instead of Painter or Photoshop?
It's designed for creating manga, giving a huge database of page formats and screentone designs. It ensures you work at the right resolution for manga output. I will still use Painter and Photoshop for colour illustrations

Is it worth the money?
Manga Studio Debut is reasonably cheap, so worth the investment. Manga Studio EX is clearly aimed at professionals, so you will only get the best out of it if you own high standard graphics equipment (Intuos tablet and large/dual monitors).

Joanna is also an award-winning freelance manga artist for the UK-based Sweatdrop Studios, check out her website for more
www.chocolatepixels.com

An incredible package, and at no cost. Now how do we get Microsoft to release a Mac-friendly version?

Expression: Graphic Designer

DIGITAL PAINTING A vector and pixel-based painting package rolled into one... from Microsoft

PRICE ... **COMPANY** ... **WEB** ... **CONTACT** ...

BETA TEST

The name is misleading. This software, previewed here at beta stage, is a surprisingly powerful and useful tool for digital artists. Microsoft is busy pushing it in the direction of developers wanting to create better interfaces for Vista, but digital artists may remember it from its days at Japanese software company, Creature House. Now you can download it for free (while it's at beta stage) and it's an incredible tool with a mass of amazing features.

Expression ... combines the flexi... pixel layers ... with the toolbox brush ...

and other tools changing as you switch between different kind...

The vector tools are excellent. They enable you to paint a sketch quick... a tablet, then go back and tweak ... to get the right shape to your line...

this may be an unfamiliar way ... but once mastered it b... And you can scale your artwork to any size with...

DETAILS

Features

System Requirements

BETA SOFTWARE

Eye Candy 5: Nature

NATURE EFFECTS Create all manner of weather effects with Alien Skin's Photoshop plug-in

Price ...
Company ...
Web ...
Contact ...

Rating ★★★★

This interesting plug-in produces some good effects when applied cautiously. It offers a good post-production service on your paintings. There are 10 weather-related effects, four are new, the others are reincarnated.

When used carefully, Snow Drif does a fast, sterling job of adding a delicate coating of snow to scenes. The older Smoke effect looks convincing and Ripples is decent for water. Fire, Ice and Water Drops look less natural. Corona is handy for adding flares to planets and motion effects, while Rust produces interesting textures.

The interface has sliders and a dynamic preview that updates as you adjust settings. Download a demo and see what you think.

This is the latest in a successful line of plug-ins, great for quickly adding post-production effects to your paintings.

A sniff of Painter, but lacking the full flavour, this package will whet your appetite for the fuller menu of the more expensive choice

Sketch Master

SKETCHING PLUG-IN
Photoshop add on turns photos into line drawings for colouring.

Price $
Company
Web
Contact

Rating

Not all of us have the patience, time or skills to create accurate and engaging portraits – but most of us can access a digital camera.
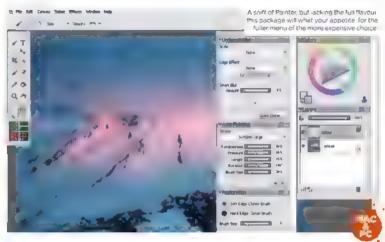
Sketch Master does a good job of turning a photo into a digital sketch, cheaply but there's nothing here that Photoshop or Painter can't do.

A quick visit to the Find Edges filter confirms that with a bit of exploration, creating a digital sketch is pretty easy using native tools. However, Sketch Master is made for producing this effect, so it presents everything in a logical straightforward manner.

The interface provides a large preview updating dynamically as you tweak the slider settings. Overall, it's a good tool for mocking up a composition or producing a sketch for colouring when you don't have time to draw.

Watercolour graph and even leather paper are among the options. Sketch Master is a useful, if not essential tool

Painter Essentials 3

BUDGET PAINTING Want the power of Painter but don't have the cash? There may be a solution

PRICE · · · **COMPANY** · · · **WEB** · · · · **CONTACT** · · ·

L ast month we looked at Painter 9.1, a tool that is undeniably the best digital painting tool available for any platform. However, power and precision come at a price and for some £300 is too much money to indulge in the full Painter software. This is where Painter Essentials comes in – being to Painter what Photoshop Elements is to Photoshop.

DEMO ON THE DISC

DETAILS

System Requirements

unlike the Model T Ford, the Aurora 5500 isn't only available in Spare Black. There are Combustion Blue, Cyborg Green, Plasma Purple and Saucer Silver versions, too.

Alienware Aurora 5500 R1

DESKTOP PC It's showy, bulky and goes like the clappers. But does that mean it's the best PC for digital artists?

Nothing can quite prepare you for the sheer bulk of an Alienware system. In terms of height, it's not too far removed from an Apple G5 but, in other aspects, it's been chomping away at the hamburgers. Alienware makes no secret that it produces systems designed for gaming. But of course, with such decent specifications they make excellent vehicles for digital artists, too.

DETAILS

Nisis Easypen G6

GRAPHICS TABLET For digital artists, graphics tablets are a necessity and this one is a bargain

A graphics tablet is an essential piece of kit for any digital artist, but getting your hands on one large enough to feel like you've really got enough room to draw can set you back a large wedge of cash. The Nisis Easypen G6 has an area of 9x12-inches. The equivalent tablet from Wacom would set you back around £335.

why this tablet... e quality of ...gineering on the Intuos range far better than on the ... is, and the G6's accessories, namely the pen and m... feel cheap and easily

...e pen is a bit odd, too at said, the Easypen does ...le a cheap way to get a large ...it's easy to set up and easy ...configure, even if the Control ...as a decent ...tivity and you feel in ...artwork. If you really ...an Intuos and want a

PC ONLY

It's not the nicest looking tablet in the world, but the Easypen is a cheap workable alternative to a Wacom

A behind-the-scenes look at DC Comics' full caped cast, by its devoted artist

Mythology

CAPED CRUSADER Award-winning book on the DC Comics Art of Alex Ross – expanded edition

Authors Chip Kidd and Geoff Spear **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £16.99
Web www.titanbooks.com **ISBN** 1840239417

There was once a little boy who dreamed of nothing else but drawing superheroes and making comics. This book shows why he chose to never grow up. It's a generous collection of comic illustrations that charts the career and early childhood ambitions of this – now adult – DC Comics artist.

comic excerpts, concept sketches and render work ... artist's influences and stori...

their approac...

photog...

Alt...

...through the adornment of characters,

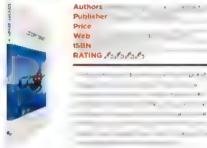**RATING** ✍✍✍✍

Further reading...

Cutting-edge, traditional and voyeuristic collections under the scope

Concept Design: Works From 7 LA Entertainment Designers

Authors	
Publisher	
Price	
Web	
ISBN	
RATING	✍✍✍✍

Aphrodisia: Art of the Female Form

Editor	
Publisher	
Price	
Web	
ISBN	
RATING	✍✍✍

Amazona

Author	
Publisher	
Price	
Web	
ISBN	
RATING	✍✍✍

The training introduces Painter's interface and soon gets you up to speed with brushes, textures, effects, sketching, painting, customising tools and working with accessories

Getting started with Corel Painter IX

BEGINNER ADVICE Learn the fundamentals of this essential application with one of the men who created it

Painter, for the beginner or those new to a digital workflow, can be a daunting prospect. This is mainly due to its vast feature set – tons of brushes, a zillion palettes and some quite essential tools hidden away in menus. Painter IX, as you'll know if you read our review last issue, is the standard as far as digital art tools go. And if you're serious about digital painting, you need to learn this tool like the back of your hand.

The double DVDs contain organised Tutorials divided into different

DETAILS

Techniques

JOHN DERRY

Meet one of the designers who was on the original development team for Painter.

How long have you used Painter?
Since 1992 before it was released

Why did you choose Painter?
It chose me

Any interesting or funny stories?
During the early development of Painter, Mark Zimmer and I travelled extensively, visiting end users to solicit their input as to how to improve the product. At a design firm we visited, a designer had made the paint can into an attractive planter!

What are your top five favourite Painter features?
Oils, Image Hose, Smeary Oil Brushes, Custom Variant Palette, Rotate Page

What are the Painter features that enable you to distinguish your art?
Painter's ability to let my own style come through. I believe this single ability distinguishes Painter from other software

Is it possible to achieve the same results with other digital painting software?
Painter excels at emulating natural media on the computer. No other painting software attempts to delve as deeply into natural media emulation as Painter, so the results will be different. Not necessarily better or worse, just different.

How do you feel about Painter?
As one of its 'fathers' it has been very rewarding to watch it grow up and be accepted by artists all over the world. My greatest reward is seeing the amazing variety of art created by it. I love it

Corpse Bride has all the gothic quirkiness and visual delights you'd expect from Tim Burton.

Corpse Bride

ANIMATION Puppetry in motion takes a Tim Burton style dose of all-out gothic goodness...

Distributor Warner Home Video **Certificate** PG **Price** £17.99

ontinuing his fashion-defying affair with stop-motion animation, Tim Burton's latest weirdfest is a riot of hand-crafted invention. He melds the doomy visuals of illustrator Edward Gorey with the all-singing, all-dancing style of his own previous animation, The Nightmare Before Christmas.

Energetically voiced by a starry cast, it's a comic romance that kicks off in a monochrome Victorian world. Meek Victor (Johnny Depp) is on the verge of an arranged marriage when he accidentally places his wedding ring on the finger of the undead corpse bride (Helena Bonham Carter).

Caught between the bland realm of the living and the vibrant, jazzy land of the dead, Victor has to choose whether to love his new life-challenged wife or the shy Victoria (Emily Watson)

he was scheduled to marry. The plot dawdles a little while he makes up his mind, but the gorgeous visuals more than compensate for any small flaws. Virtually every character is designed by Burton, to give a charmingly nightmarish world where eyeballs pop out of sockets at regular intervals and even the maggots have something to say.

The animation is so beautifully executed it's almost impossible to believe that it isn't CGI. The disc extras give some insight into how this was achieved, with input from the puppet builders and designers.

While some of these extras get caught up in self-congratulatory 'Tim Burton is a genius' mode, there's still enough to make this a worthwhile purchase for gothically-minded animation fans.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Other new releases...

Sci-fi feasts include an iconic classic and a futuristic 'western' from Buffy's creator...

The Day The Earth Stood Still

Distributor 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment
Certificate 12
Price £17.99
RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Any self-respecting sci-fi fan should already own this black and white classic. Even so, this release's fascinating feature-length documentary may tempt you to upgrade.

An alien visitor lands his flying saucer in Washington and soon discovers that Earth is riddled with paranoia and violence. To underline his warning that Earthlings must stop their infighting, he neutralises the world's electrical power, bringing it to a standstill.

The film contains some of SF's most iconic imagery, in particular Gort, a towering silver robot (a nightclub doorman,

sweating in a lace-up suit), and that simple saucer.

Its earnest agenda puts it a cut above rival bug-eyed-monster B-movies of its time. While its peace message may seem naive 55 years on, it still remains strangely moving.

Serenity

Distributor Universal Pictures Video
Certificate 15
Price £19.99
RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Buffy creator Joss Whedon's movie follows on from his axed TV show, Firefly, but is utterly accessible for newcomers. Curiously mixing the western genre with sci-fi action and a futuristic setting, Whedon skilfully sketches a believable universe, divided between a 'civilised' Alliance and ragged frontier worlds.

The plot centres on River, a girl who has been turned into a psychic killing machine by the Alliance. Now hiding out on the spaceship Serenity, River knows a terrible secret, one the Alliance will kill to protect. Sharp dialogue and the chemistry

between the cast mean you'll fall for Serenity's crew, particularly captain Malcolm Reynolds, an honourable rogue with a hint of Han Solo.

Extras include a fistful of mini features and a director's commentary.

Continuing the story from
the classic original, this is
another masterful work.

Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence

ENGLISH DUB New benchmark for Japanese animation.

Studio Production I.G **Distributor** Manga **Certificate** 15 **Price** £19.99

Ghost in the Shell 2 has it all: stunningly beautiful animation, a clever plot and a deeper meaning. Ironically, the only thing it's short on is soul. But make no mistake, you should see this anime. It is truly breathtaking. Despite being a touch impersonal its images remain with you even longer than most live action films.

This power could be thanks to the hauntingly-brilliant music of Kenji Kawai, or the magnificent world-building scenes that Mamoru Oshii is rightly famed for. Peculiarly, it's certainly not due to the characters. The central figure, Batou, never really opens up.

The script neatly follows on from the first film. It's been three years since his partner, Motoko, disappeared into the net, but cybercop Batou is back on duty, investigating a spate of homicidal sex droids loose in the city. It seems these droids have a secret up their synthetic sleeves and finding it out is going to be a real challenge...

Taking as a theme a combination of ontology and identity is an incredibly brave move in an age obsessed with the skin deep. It's a tribute to the anime audience that this subject matter attracts such interest. Oshii has realised this potential and pointed anime in a direction all its own.

The newly-dubbed English version certainly makes GITS2 easier to watch, but to keep pace with the Japanese dialogue it lacks feeling. Despite its faults, this is an undeniably masterful work from Production IG. Like most masterpieces, it will take time and context for it to be fully appreciated.

RATING ★★★★★

Also look at…
A futuristic Samurai adventure and a high-emotion, tear-jerking true story.

Samurai 7

Studio Gonzo
Distributor MVM
Certificate E
Price £19.99
RATING ★★★★

A highly enjoyable futuristic Samurai romp. The animation is superb, the characters endearing and the plot lines keep you gripped. This DVD offers the first four in a series spread across 26 episodes. You'll be itching for the next instalment.

The idea of filling the boots of Akira Kurosawa's fiendishly brilliant Seven Samurai isn't even on the agenda. This isn't a re-make, it's a light-hearted and enjoyable adventure, with a borrowed title. It's set in the aftermath of war, as demobbed warriors turn bandit and enslave the simple country folk.

We follow the adventures of three youngsters in the big city searching for Samurai to protect their village from marauding metal bandits.

Studio Gonzo (Gantz, Burst Angel) delivers animation of a uniformly high standard, enabling the story and characters to shine though. A highly addictive anime with wide audience appeal.

Grave of the Fireflies

Studio Studio Ghibli
Distributor Optimum Releasing
Certificate 12
Price £10
RATING ★★★★★

Set in Japan, post World War II, this true story follows the increasingly desperate struggle for survival of two children orphaned by American incendiary bombers. This is a highly emotional, beautifully animated and haunting film. Seita and his young sister Setsuka have lost their mother, their father is away and their extended family see them as an unwanted burden. The two children take to the street as Japan comes apart at the seams.

The subjects of loss, war and love may not be what we expect from anime but it's all the more affecting for that. The depth of emotion makes this anime powerful. Be prepared to shed a few tears. The animation is rich with a deep lustrous tone that modern digital animation struggles to reproduce. So much so that you can watch with the sound off and still get a thrill at the graceful images. ●

Artists inside this issue...

Martin Bland
"I paint what's deep-seated in my imagination" **Page 48**

Marta Dahlig
"I can only concentrate on painting in the dark" **Page 44**

Kuang Hong
"When you dream, you're actually still in reality" **Page 56**